

THE MYTH OF MATERIAL SUCCESS REFLECTED IN *THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS* MOVIE DIRECTED BY GABRIELE MUCCINO



THESIS

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For the Sarjana Degree in English Department
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Sebelas Maret University

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SEBELAS MARET UNIVERSITY
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Stated truthfully that the thesis entitled The Myth of Material Success as Reflected in *The Pursuit of Happiness* Directed by Gabriele Muccino is originally made by the researcher. It is neither a plagiarism nor made by other people. The statements related to other people's work are written in quotation and included within bibliography.

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Surakarta, July 2010

The researcher

Sri Andayani

MOTTO

*Dengan nama Allah bagi diriku, hartaku dan
agamaku.*

*Ya Allah, jadikanlah aku ridha atas keputusanMu
Dan berilah aku berkah pada apa saja yang telah
ditetapkan untukku
Sehingga aku tidak menginginkan disegerakan apa
yang telah Engkau tunda dan tidak menginginkan
penundaan apa yang telah Engkau segerakan
(HR Ibnu Sunni)*

*Pessimism can reduce the level of your attractiveness
(Toga Nainggolan)*

*When you really want something to happen, the whole
universe conspires so that your wish comes true
(The Alchemist, Paolo Coelho)*

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to

My beloved Mother and Father

My Big Brother and my lovely Nephew

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I realized that this thesis is far from being perfect. Therefore, comments and suggestions are accepted kindly. I really hope that this thesis will be useful to everyone who is interested in American Study.

Surakarta, July 2010

Sri Andayani

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ABSTRACT

SRI ANDAYANI. C1306512. 2010. *The Myth of Material Success Reflected in The Pursuit of Happyness Movie Directed by Gabriele Muccino*. Thesis. English Department, Faculty of Letters and Fine Arts, Sebelas Maret University.

The thesis is written based on the movie research entitled *The Pursuit of Happyness* directed by Gabriele Muccino. It aims at explaining how the myth of material success is reflected by the main character of the movie, Chris Gardner.

The research is descriptive qualitative in which the main data are in the forms of dialogues, scenes, characters, characterization and the cinematographic elements while the supporting data are taken from the books, journals, magazines, articles and internet, which are relevant to the topic discussed.

Since the research is in the scope of American Study which is an interdisciplinary study, it involves several disciplines applied in the form of theory and approach. In answering the research question, the research applies some theories and approaches including popular culture theory, semiotic film theory, sociological and cultural approaches as its point of view.

From the analysis, it can be found that the myth of material success is obviously reflected in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie through the main character, Chris Gardner. Furthermore, Chris Gardner pursues his dream based on five basic motifs in the myth of material success. The limitations belonging to him such as poverty and education background do not stop him from achieving his dream to be a stockbroker. He obtains the rewards after his long restless struggle to overcome many obstacles. The rewards also come closer to him since he has virtues such as intelligence, self-discipline, high responsibility and earnestness. His huge drive and ambition deliver him to get closer to his dream. In the last part of analysis, a modicum of luck is received by Chris Gardner after doing his long restless efforts.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

The United States of America nowadays is very famous among other nations in the world. The United States of America has created herself a great and powerful nation in influencing her belief and value toward millions of people around the world through the products she makes. Unconsciously, what we are wearing, consuming or adopting is originally from America. No wonder that we can find many things about American popular culture in many countries. We can find easily the *McDonald* fast food restaurants in Europe, Australia, Asia or even Africa. Undeniably, the American popular culture has become an integrated part of our lives. Based on Jack Nachbar and Kevin Lause, "...a "popular culture" which refers to "the products of human work and thought which are (or have been) accepted and approved by a large community or population""(Nachbar and Lause, 1992:14). In popular culture, the works or products do not only represent the belief and value of the people but they also influence and alter the belief and value of the people.

The other form of American popular culture products that can be easily found in every country is the existence of Hollywood movie. The movies are not only produced for the entertainment, but they are produced for the commercial purposes. As stated by Jack Nachbar and Kevin Lause that, "the movies were not made with the intention of educating, challenging or enlightening their target

audience: they were produced with the intention of getting as many people into the theaters as many times as possible. Each of the movies on the list is a multi-million dollar earner in a multi-billion industry” (Nachbar and Lause, 1992:41). Since 1960s, the Hollywood movie has become a great industry in America and its existence has given billions of dollars to the America’s income and taxes. In fact, the Hollywood movies are broadcast in many theaters all around the world, so they are not only popular among the American people but also popular among millions of people around the world.

Movie is also one of popular culture icons. “The term “icon” stems from the Greek Word for “image”” (Nachbar and Lause, 1992:170). At the previous times, icon was used as a means of communicating significant beliefs and values to many illiterate believers. The icons embodied the myths, beliefs and values which form the cultural mindset. As an icon, the movie has a very important role in shaping the mindset of the people. Movie is no longer seen just as an entertainment or popular product, but it is also the form of reality. Movie is like a story visualized by the audio and motion picture of human’s experience. It has become a reflection of human’s life in the past, present and the imagination of the future.

Many movies show the real experience of American people and some of them are based on the true story. *The Pursuit of Happyness* is one of American movies that obviously reflect the myth, belief and value of American people. Uniquely, *The Pursuit of Happyness* is an American movie which is directed by Italian director, Gabriele Muccino. It is attractive to see how the myth of material

success and the American dream are seen by foreigner's perspective. Muccino believes that only foreigner who can only understand the essence of the American dream.

Gabriele was really passionate about the material. But what sold us is when he said to us, "As Americans, you guys don't really understand the American Dream. To really appreciate the essence of the American Dream, you have to be a foreigner.' That's when we realized that his impression of the American Dream would be original and different and give the movie a unique take. (<http://www.emanuellevy.com/search/details.cfm?id=3838>, cited on August 1st 2010, at 8: 45 am)

In fact, Muccino is not the only foreign director who directs the Hollywood movies. "During 1980s, the Hollywood movie was also fed by the filmmakers from outside Hollywood. Many directors came from abroad-from Britain (Tony and Ridley Scott), Australia(Peter Weir, Fred Schepisi), Germany (Wolfgang Peterson), the Netherlands (Paul Verhoeven), or Finland (Rennie Harlin)" (Bordwell and Thompson, 1997:469). Since *The Pursuit of Happyness* was released in the late 2006, the film debuted at number one at the box office, was making \$27 million during its opening weekend. "*The Pursuit of Happyness* garnered positive reviews from critics with a 66 percent approval rating on the site Rotten Tomatoes" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pursuit_of_Happyness, November 28th 2007, 10.05 am). The success of this movie is also shown by winnings of several movie awards nominations. Below were the evidence of the success of the movie in attracting the attention of moviegoers and the film critics.

Academy Awards

- Best performance by an Actor in a Leading Role (Will Smith)-Nomination

Black Reel Awards

- Best Film-Nomination
- Best Actor (Will Smith)-Nomination
- Best Breakthrough Performer (Jaden Smith)-Nomination

Broadcast Film Critics Association

- Best Actor (Will Smith)-Nomination
- Best Younger Actor (Jaden Smith)-Nomination

Golden Globe Awards

- Best Actor- Motion Picture Drama (Will Smith)-Nomination
- Best Original Song (“A Father’s Way”)-Nomination

Image Awards

- Outstanding Motion Picture-Winner
- Outstanding Actor in a Motion Picture (Will Smith)-Nomination
- Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Motion Picture (Jaden Smith)-Nomination
- Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Motion Picture (Thandie Newton)-Nomination

Screen Actors Guild Awards

- Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Leading Role (Will Smith)-Nomination

MTV Movie Awards 2007

- Best Performance (Will Smith)-Nomination
- Best Breakthrough Performance (Jaden Smith)-Winner

BET Awards

- Best Actor (Will Smith)-Nomination

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pursuit_of_Happyness, cited on November 28th 2007, 10:05)

The Pursuit of Happyness is the drama movie of black man named Chris Gardner who struggles for getting a better life. Recently there are more movies telling about the life of black people. “The presentation of African-Americans in Hollywood film changed dramatically in the years around 1970s” (Lev, 2000:150). This movie is inspired from the true story of Chris Gardner (a successful businessman). It is based on the autobiography of Chris Gardner, a black man who became a successful stockbroker. This title of the movie is derived from the words of Thomas Jefferson in the United States Declaration of Independence. The

misspelling of “happiness” refers to a theme in the movie where Gardner is upset that a wall decorating his son’s daycare is incorrectly spelled. The movie, which is set in San Francisco of 1981, follows the period when Chris Gardner (played by actor Will Smith), tried to earn money by selling the medical equipment, the bone density scanner, while her wife, Linda (played by actress Thandie Newton) worked a harsh job as being a laundry girl. They all worked hard to raise their only son, Christopher, which is played by Will Smith’s son, Jaden Smith. His effort in selling his medical equipment was not easy and it was hard to sell that item since it was luxurious and expensive equipment at that time.

The movie moves rapidly when his wife leaves him since she could not stand living in poverty any longer. Still he has not sold any equipment for a while and he should lose his shelter because he does not have much money to rent. Being homeless and jobless, Chris Gardner (the name of the character) is able to create the sympathy of the audiences. He does not stop working and struggling for a better livelihood and eventually he gets the great opportunity to change his life. After long painful effort, finally he gets the opportunity to follow the internship program held by Dean Witter, a brokerage firm in San Francisco. He follows the internship in the stock market in the morning, and in the evening he should find a shelter to sleep. Eventually by working hard, he is able to pursue his happiness and be accepted in Dean Witter stock exchange, defeating his other competitors. This movie gives a happy ending story to the audiences as the evidence of material success achieved by a very hard work.

Moreover, the researcher wants to emphasize on the myth which American people believe in achieving the success in American society. The character of Chris Gardner is the real portrait of American people today. American people now still believe that the success of people is signed by the material thing they can afford. “With the hard work come achievement, and with achievement comes the material comforts of the American dream and sometimes even great riches and place in history” (Nachbar and Lause, 1992:135). Through this research, the researcher would like to observe how this myth of success is reflected through the character’s efforts in the movie.

B. Research Question

Based on the description above, the researcher raises one problem to be analyzed further. The question is

How is the myth of material success reflected by the main character of the movie, Chris Gardner?

C. Scope of Study

Frankly to say, there are many points that can be analyzed through this movie to get the understanding of the American people’s life. In order to get a qualified result, it is important to give a limitation in this study. Thus, the researcher only analyzes the dialogues, attitudes, the gesture of the main character, Chris Gardner, and other cinematographic elements in the movie which reflect the myth of material success.

D. Objective of the Study

In this part, the researcher attempts to answer the problem that has been raised in the research question. Thus, the objective of the study is to explain how the myth of material success is reflected through the main character of the movie, Chris Gardner.

E. Benefits of the Study

In this research, the researcher expects that this study gives some following benefits:

1. To the researchers of American Study

To understand the belief and value of American people

2. To the readers

To show the different perspectives of American people in pursuing happiness

3. To the students of American Study

To know the importance of possessing material as a symbol of success for American people

F. Methods of Study

1. Type of Research

This is a descriptive qualitative research. In descriptive qualitative research, the data that have been collected, then are described and interpreted.

“It can refer to research about person’s lives, stories, behavior but also about organizational functioning, social movements or interactional relationships” (Straus and Corbin, 1990:17). The qualitative research also uses documents, books, videotapes and other data to support the study.

2. Data and Source of Data

The source of data of this research is the original DVD of *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie which was released by Columbia Picture on December 15th 2006. The main data are taken from the source of data in the forms of dialogues, scenes, characters, characterization, and the cinematographic elements such as camera angle, camera movement, lighting, camera distance, sound and so forth. While the supporting data are taken from the books, journals, magazines, articles and internet, which are relevant to the topic discussed.

3. Technique of Collecting and Analyzing Data

The researcher analyzed the movie as the source of data in this research. This movie was observed into several steps. The first step was watching the movie and all the scenes displayed in the movie. The second step was finding certain scenes or dialogues, which were relevant to support the analysis. The third step was interpreting each scene, dialogue and other parts which give a significant point to the development of the research.

Since the main data were not enough to support the research, the researcher needed the supporting data to complete the information that could not be found within the movie. After observing the movie, the researcher

continued to conduct the analysis supported by the articles, journals, and books provided.

In fact, there are many Hollywood movies telling about the myth of material success. The researcher considers that *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie is much interesting to discuss since it does not only show about how an American pursues his happiness by working hard. It also shows about the myth of material success which is not only accepted and believed by white men as the dominant group, but also by the minority group like black men. Besides, this movie is inspired by a true story so it can show the readers that the myth of material success does not only exist within the movie but also in real life.

G. Theoretical Approaches

American study is interdisciplinary study in which every problem of the study should be analyzed from various perspectives. In this research, the researcher uses two approaches and several theories to reveal the problem and discussion briefly. The first approach of this research is the cultural approach. This approach can help the researcher to understand the historical background of Black American in the United States. It can also help the researcher to find out how the concept of the myth of material success is accepted by large number of American people and how it influences the mindset of American people.

The second approach is sociological approach. Sociological approach deals with all social aspects, which influence the development of the main

character, Chris Gardner. It is also used to reveal the social condition and background when this movie was set.

As it has been stated before, the movie is a product of popular culture. It is not only considered as the form of entertainment but it also has a power as the reflection of the society's belief and value at the same time. Moreover, the existence of the movie unconsciously alters our belief and value. "popular culture is a "Funhouse Mirror" because it *reflects* our "image" back to us but also alters our image in the process of doing so" (Nachbar and Lause, 1992:7). Thus, the popular culture theory is very needed to reveal how the myth of material success is depicted within the movie.

Second theory is semiotic film theory, which attempts to understand how meaning is achieved in various forms of audio and visual representation. Further, based on this theory, everything surrounds us is sign such as words, images, sounds and so forth. The semiotics is used to read and reveal the meaning behind those signs. Semiotics was first applied to film in 1960 by the French scholar, Christian Metz. "Film semiotic has sought to explain how meaning is embodied in the film and how that meaning is communicated to the audience" (Allen and Gomery, 1985:77).

H. Thesis Organization

This thesis is divided into four chapters which are structured as follows:

CHAPTER I, INTRODUCTION consists of Research Background, Research Question, Scope of Study, Objective of Study, Benefits of Study,

Methods of Study, Theoretical Approaches and Thesis Organization.

CHAPTER II, LITERATURE REVIEW consists of Theory of Popular Culture, The Myth of Material Success, The Semiotic Film Theory, Basic Elements of Cinematography, The Social Condition of American Society in the Early 1980s, The Historical Background of Black American in the United States, and The Phrase of the Pursuit of Happiness.

CHAPTER III, ANALYSIS consists of How the Myth of Material Success is reflected by Chris Gardner in *The Pursuit of Happiness* Movie.

CHAPTER IV, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theory of Popular Culture

When we talk about popular culture, it means that we have dealt with the favorite shows we watch, the fancy jeans we wear or play list of music we listen everyday. Indeed, many forms of popular culture can be found easily in our daily lives. We do not have to make a huge effort in getting popular culture. All we need to do is just sitting at our cozy couch and everything will come to us, at that moment.

In order to study what popular culture is, we first need to define the term “culture”. In fact, there are many disputes among scholars in determining the meaning of culture. The two groups “the Critics” and “the cameras” have different opinion about what culture really is. The critics determine the culture as the peak expression of human’s creativity, everything that is uplifting and edifying and that which is profound and respectable. While the cameras argue that the culture is a matter of “good” and “bad” and they completely ignore the notion of quality in determining the culture. (Nachbar and Lause, 1992:14). Moreover, Raymond William tries to define the term “culture” based on three definitions. First of all, culture can be used to refer to ‘a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development’. A second use of the word ‘culture’ might be to suggest ‘a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group’. Finally, William

suggests that culture can be used to refer to ‘the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity’. (William in Storey, 2000:2).

Besides there are many disputes in determining the term “culture”, there are many ways to define the term “popular culture”. Raymond William says that popular culture is simply culture which is widely favored or well liked by many people (William in Storey, 2000: 6). This definition is also supported by Nachbar and Lause, which determine the popular culture as the products of human work and thought which are (or have been) accepted and approved of by a large community or population (Nachbar and Lause, 1992: 14). Through these definitions, we can sum up the conclusion that a culture will be seen as a popular culture if it is approved and accepted by many people. In this conclusion, it seems that popular culture ignores the notion of quality.

The major theme of studying popular culture leads us to some important characteristics of popular culture:

- Popular culture consists of artifacts (objects and people) and events (activities surrounding the objects and people)
- Popular culture reflects audience beliefs and values (it satisfies us _”We know what you want...”)
- Popular culture shapes audience beliefs and values (it arouses and frustrates us_”...WE WANT YOU TO WANT IT”)
- Popular culture is commercial (it is produced with the goal of making money)
- Popular culture is often imitative (of itself)-it hopes that what has worked before will work again.

- Popular culture surrounds us –it forms the fabric of our daily lives. (Nachbar and Lause, 1992:10).

In popular culture study, popular culture is not merely created for a trivial reason. It is created to entertain the consumers and make them satisfied with various choices are preserved. Indeed, popular culture is strongly related with satisfaction, both for the consumers and the producers of popular culture themselves. The main goal of popular culture is finding out what we want, what we think, feel and believe- and then transform it into the concrete products as the reflection of our image. As stated in Nachbar and Lause' book:

...and it is indeed part of popular culture's goal to find out what we want-what we think and feel and believe-and then transform its products into the image of our desires. (Nachbar and Lause, 1992:3)

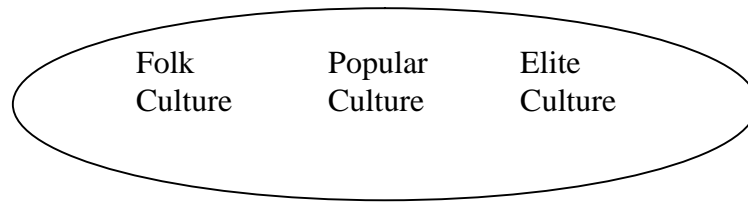
As a matter of fact, the producers of popular culture do not only fulfill the audiences' needs and desires, but they also try to mould the new beliefs and values to the audiences. "The producers of popular culture are promoters as well- they create a product which reflects us and will draw us to the mirror, but they also come chasing after us to instill values and beliefs likely to ensure their success" (Nachbar and Lause, 1992:6).

The simplest example of how popular culture producers alter our beliefs and values is by the existence of advertising. Advertising persuades us to fulfill and satisfy our need that has been created deliberately by them. At first, the producers only accommodate the women's need of the healthy and beautiful skin by creating the facial cream. But at the same time, they also try to mold new

beliefs by the advertising they made that healthy beautiful skin is white one. The persuasive voice of the advertising unconsciously creates the new beliefs among women. They start thinking that they should be white in order to be beautiful. Eventually they buy the whitening products to satisfy their need.

The producers of popular culture try to catch what we want and represent it into a certain product. At the same time, they also insert the new beliefs and values to each product they preserve.

Popular culture creates the vast majority of the artifacts and events which compose our daily lives. At least, all of us used to experience two other kinds of culture which we need to understand. The first alternative of culture is called “folk” culture which refers to human work and thought which are developed within a limited community and traced down from generation to generation. The means of communication is usually oral and the creator or the author of this culture is usually unknown. In Indonesian culture, the legend story of “Malin Kundang” is considered a folk culture since it is orally communicated from generation to generation and we do not know who exactly created this story for the very first time. The second type of culture is called “elite” culture. Elite culture is the human work and thought which are created by and for a limited number of people who have specialized interests, skills or knowledge. The classic music concert which is usually performed nowadays is an example of elite culture. Hence the relationship among those three types of culture is depicted in the diagram below:



- This simple diagram represents the several significant aspects of the way the culture interact with us.
- The diagram places those three cultures on the same level. It means no culture is regarded better or worse than any other.
- The shape of the “egg” or oval shows that popular culture is the biggest portion of society’s total way of life. In fact, we can find many forms of popular culture in our daily lives easier than the forms of elite or folk culture.
- The relationship among the three is fluid. Since there is no barrier or line which separate the culture from each other, each culture easily flows to its neighborhood. For instance, William Shakespeare is now seen as a form of elite culture, yet as late as the nineteenth century his work was very much a part of popular culture.

B. The Myth of Material Success

In American society, many famous figures obtain their success because they start their career from very low. The perpetual effort and hard work have

delivered them to the highest ladder of success. Thus, they can enjoy the abundance of material comfort and leisure that most people expect for. The African American TV presenter, Oprah Winfrey, started her career by being a local TV anchor 25 years ago. Now, we all recognize her as the number one TV presenter in the United States who dedicates herself as a philanthropist. What has been done by her is the example of what popular culture theory called as Myth of Material Success.

Shortly, the myth of Material Success is the bedrock beliefs that have been embedded in the mindset of American people that the success and material comfort can be achieved only by working hard. “And that is the American myth of success. With hard work come achievement, and with achievement comes the material comforts of the American dream and sometimes even great riches and a place in history” (Marsden in Nachbar and Lause, 1992: 135).

As a matter of fact, there are many myths which are embedded in the mindset of American culture such as the myth of romantic love, the myth of Endless Abundance, The myth of Rural Simplicity and so forth. The myth of Material Success is believed as the strongest myth growing among the hearts of American members of society.

This myth is not based upon invention and imagination, and sometimes it is not logical and little bit emotional. The myth, however, says nothing about truth or falsity. It derives from the long tradition, history and biographies of American great men hundreds of years before. Even though it is based on reality but it is not merely true. We can find many American people who dedicated their lives for a

better career but the success never comes. For example, a college student spending his time studying very hard for an exam but then he discovers that the test covers none of the materials he has carefully learned. While, another student get a grade of A without much effort. These failure testimonies do not change American people's faith of this myth. This myth has become the deeply rooted cultural belief which ignores the notion of right or wrong. Marsden (1992) explains that the development of the myth of material success is divided into several periods such as: the period of 1600-1800, the 1800s, the twentieth century and more recent revisions.

a. The period of 1600-1800

The origin of the myth of Material Success can be traced back to the days of American's first settlement. For a long time, the European people had dreamt of staying forever in the place where there was no landowner living in. In the late 16th century, puritan people of England fantasized the utopia country where every citizen could easily practice his freedom and he could live in the perfect and harmonious life. Because of the religious conflict between the Anglican Church (official church in England at that time) and Puritan, some puritans decided to flee to Holland that was more tolerable and liberal. They found that staying in Holland longer was not good for their children in the future. "the puritans had left Holland in 1620 largely out of concern over the spiritual welfare of their children, who felt were in danger of being "drawn away into dangerous courses" by the examples of conduct around them" (Cullen, 2003: 31-32). The story of the first settlers and explorers which portrayed the New World as the real depiction of the New Eden

on earth had attracted puritans going there. The economic background also caused the migration of those people to the continent of America.

Captain John Smith wrote that the landscapes in Virginia were appropriated to be inhabited where they could make the ideal new civilization. “The country is not mountainous nor yet so low but such pleasant plain hills and fertile valleys, one prettily crossing another, and watered so conveniently with their brooks and crystal springs, as if art itself had devised them (Marsden in Nachbar and Lause, 1992: 136). However, in the northern colonies, the landscapes were not that ideal for a living where the land was rocky and the Indians were intimidating. They have to struggle for life in the wilderness with the threats of the savage animals and the Indians. For them America seemed much more like a hell than a heaven, inhabited as it was by demonic beings. Many of them did not know to survive in the wilderness. Some of them were nearly starving during the first winter in America and they should end up their dream of freedom by the death. Eventually they came to agree that the great promise held out by America was not ease, but hard work.

In spite of many obstacles faced by the first settlers in America, the work still offered the equal reward that seemed impossible in England. At least, the settlers could directly reap their crops from their own land without any obligation to share some of them to the barons. No landlord was around to take most of the profit away. Even the indenture servants could acquire the piece of land at the end of their seven-year term service. The experiences of living in America created the

idea in America, the hard working man was not fated to live in poverty, but a material comfort and leisure.

The puritans descended from the Calvinist branch of Protestantism, which meant that they believed individuals' fates were sealed from the moment they were born, and there was absolutely nothing they could do to affect their ultimate salvation or damnation. One could never know until the day of private judgment whether they belong to the "elect" (those chosen for heaven) or not. "The Puritan believed and acted as if a person could make a difference in making the world better place-indeed, had an obligation to do so. On the other, they believed they were powerless to do anything but follow the dictates of God's inscrutable will. Here, it seems, is the worst of all possible words: accountability without power" (Cullen, 2003: 19). So the logic ran, if someone had led a virtuous and industrious earthly life, it was possible that he had been predestined for heaven.

For the puritans, a success was a spiritual matter. The material success was the accident of the larger goal, and the pursuit of virtue is much more important than the pursuit of the dollar. When the spirit of the enlightenment came to the colonies in the eighteenth century, the sense of Puritanism was challenged by the spirit of rationalism. The well known rationalist figure in the enlightenment era was Benjamin Franklin. He believed that the best way to serve God is by doing good to others. "Franklin, an avowed deist, believed that "the most acceptable service of God was the doing good to man" (Marsden in Nachbar and Lause, 1992:138). He also assumed that this life should be dedicated to the pursuit of human happiness. Industry was one of moral virtues Franklin most prized. He

believed that the wealth and success could not be achieved through selfishness but honesty and hard work. In fact, Benjamin Franklin's life was a testimony of the myth of Material Success. By the strict self-discipline and his industry, he could prove that being the 15th child of a poor chandler was not obstacle to becoming the wealthy printer, publisher and respected diplomat. His life's philosophy was reflected in his *Poor Richard Almanac* which became the inspiration for a later generation of American society.

b. The 1800s

In the tradition of religion in the 17th century, the success was usually associated with luck (some were born to succeed), while in the secular 18th century tradition, the success was usually associated with pluck (anyone who put a mind to it could succeed). These contradictory assumptions were then elaborated into the best selling novels written by Horatio Alger Jr. His novels such as *Luck and Pluck*, *Ragged Dick* and *Tattered Tom* were widely read by many working class people at that time. The advanced wealth had caused them to take a leisure time for reading the best selling books. Most of his works portrayed underprivileged youths who win fame and wealth by practicing such virtues as honesty, diligence, and perseverance. Alger heroes were quite frequently fatherless and they should take care of themselves at the early age, thus they had a sense of mature responsibility.

In the process of seeking their fortune, they must often against the thieves or greedy man who achieved their success in trickily ways. Because of their ability in maintaining his morality and idealism to be good persons, the life

rewards them the success. In the end of Alger's novel story, the heroes received the gifts from their rich bosses because of their honesty and goodness. For Alger, success was definitely a combination of puritan's luck and Franklin's pluck.

In 1859, the British Scientist, Charles Darwin, published the theory named *The Origin of Species* which challenged the puritan's belief of human creation. In fact, the idea of Darwin really undermined the Book of Genesis. In the Book of Genesis, it was told that God created the universe in six days, and on the sixth day He created animals, as well as the first human beings—Adam and Eve. While in Darwin's theory, human was an evolution which was accomplished by the animal because he was the strongest and the fittest. In fact, the theory of Darwin also confirms two notions of Old puritan.

Because "struggle for existence" and "survival of the fittest" were the most popular catchwords in Darwinian thought, his theories confirmed two old puritan notions: 1) that hard work was an integral part of humanity's lot; 2) that only "the elect" (Darwin rechristened them "the fittest") could ultimately succeed. (Marsden in Nachbar and Lause, 1992: 141).

The major industrialists also said that the keys of upward mobility were the self improvement and individualism. The success was only earned by aggression and constant work.

c. The Twentieth Century

In the early the twentieth century, the industry and corporation were mushrooming through out the United States. The successful big businessmen were still dominated by WASPs (White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestants), well educated, city bred and from a well-off family while the rest were poor immigrants or farm boys. Since the corporation was an update manifestation of feudal system, it closed the

opportunity for those who started their career from the lowest ladder. It destroyed the idea of the American dream in which everyone has the same right and opportunity in pursuing his happiness. The traditions of Americans' hard work and struggle were challenged by the main features of corporation. "First, highly efficient and quick production methods made it unnecessary for people to work long hours each day, and work was therefore less of a social and cultural imperative. Secondly, the principle of standardization which is the cardinal rule of modern business methods extended itself to employees, too, creating workers who were frequently divorced from the products they produced and the business they did" (Marsden in Nachbar and Lause, 1992: 142).

Even though the new myth of corporation offers the promise of material comfort and economic stability for all, but it never offers the emotional riches. Thus, the twentieth century American myth defined the riches as a satisfaction of psychological rather than material needs. As a result, the best selling of the self-improvement books were so popular among the middle class workers in the twentieth century. The books did not merely offer the advices to be success materially, but also be success emotionally.

d. More Recent Revisions

From the beginning through the twentieth century, the American success has been arranged around five basic beliefs which have served as recurring motifs.¹⁾ American democracy allows its citizens to rise above any limitations into which they may have been born; 2) Hard work brings riches and physical comforts; 3) These rewards come to those who are deserving of them (virtuous),

and who; 4) have the drive and ambition to attain them plus 5) a modicum of good luck.

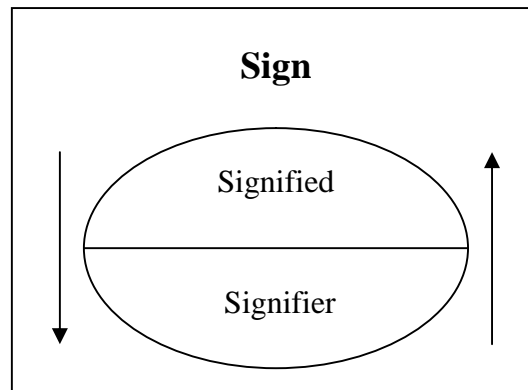
C. Semiotic Film Theory

Semiotics, also known as semiology, is the study of signs. It is derived from the Greek "semeion" which means sign. The term semiotics was firstly introduced by the American philosopher named Charles Sanders Pierce (1839-1914). In the meantime, the term semiology was proposed by the Swiss linguist named Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913). Through his journal entitled *Course de linguistics general*, he defined the classic definition of what he called semiology:.

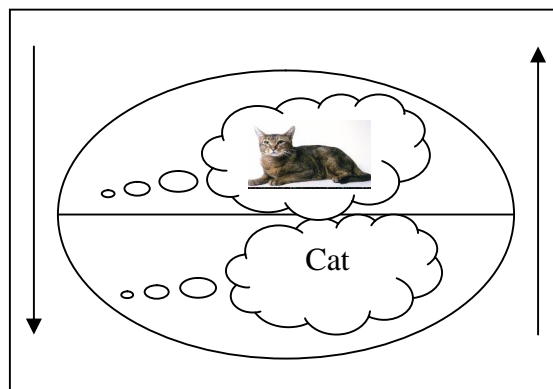
A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable; it would be a part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology; I shall call it semiology (from the Greek semeion 'sign'). Semiology would show what constitutes sign what laws govern them. Since the science does not yet exist, no one can say what it would be; but it has right to existence, a place staked out in advance. (Sausure, 1988:82-83 in Kurniawan, 2001: 14)

According to Sausure, the sign is the whole that result from the association of the signifier with the signified (Sausure 1983:67 in <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem06.html> cited on November 8th 2008, 02:22 pm). The sign is composed by the signifier and the signified. The Signifier is the mental impression of the sign and the signified is the concept it represents. "The signifier is the *sensory impression* of the sign: the mental image of marks on the page, or of sounds in the air, for example. The signified is the *abstract concept* the sign invokes." (Thwaites et all, 1994:27). The relationship

between the signifier and the signified is called signification. The two aspects of sign are often pictured like this:



As shown in the picture, the signifier and the signified look like two separable parts of the sign. In reality, they both always go together. The signifier will be meaningless without the signified, and the signifier will be formless without the signifier. The signification is represented by the arrows. To make the understanding of sign easier, we can take the word “cat” as the example by using the picture below.

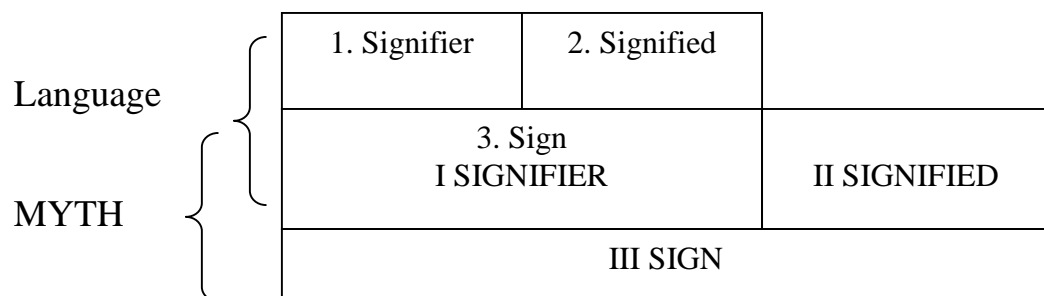


The sound of “cat” and the written word “cat” are the signified, while the image of cat as furry animal that purrs and meows is the signifier. The combination of the signified and the signifier forms “cat” as the sign.

According to Sausure, both signifier and signified are abstract mental entities because they just happen in our head.

The sign itself is a mental construct, something which happens in our heads. What distinguishes a mere combination of sounds or graphic marks from a sign is a mental, cognitive activity. As a result, the two components of the sign, the signifier and the signified, must also be mental entities. (Thwaites et al, 1994:28).

Semiotics began to become a major approach to cultural studies in the late 1960s, partly as a result of the work of Roland Barthes (1915-1980). This French critique explored the concept of sign by adopting the Sausurean semiological system. He developed the wider the semiological system which was called “Myth”. In his essay, *Myth Today*, myth is constructed by the two semiological systems; the *first-order signification* or denotation and the *second-order signification* or connotation. The denotation is the most basic or literal meaning of a sign, e.g., the word "rose" signifies a particular kind of flower. The connotation is the cultural meaning of a sign, e.g. the word “rose” signifies a passion. At the first order of signification, the sign consists of the signifier and the signified. In the second order of signification, the denotative sign at the first order becomes the signifier at the second order.



According to Barthes' theory, myth is a peculiar system that is constructed from a semiological chain which existed before it: it is *a second-order semiological system*. Sign (namely associative total of a concept and an image) in the first system, becomes a mere signifier in the second (Barthes translated by Lavers, 1999: 114). From the diagram above, it can be seen that in myth, there are two semiological systems, *language* and myth. In language, the sign is formed by the signifier and the signified and the sign in this language becomes the signifier in myth. Myth itself is also called metalanguage since it is a second language; in which one speaks about the first, the language.

The chair, in the denotative sign, is separate movable seat for one person, usually with a back and in some cases with arms. While in the connotative sign, chair refers to power or position.

The science of semiotics nowadays is also applied to identify the signs beyond fashion, photograph, advertisement or movie. The semiotic film theory was firstly applied in the 1960s by the French scholar, Christian Metz. As stated by Metz, film is not a language, but it is very much like language. English, Chinese, French, are the "language system". Cinema or movie, therefore, may be a language of a sort, but it is not clearly a language system. "It is not because the cinema is language that it can tell such fine stories, but rather it has become language because it has told such fine stories" (Metz in Monaco, 2000: 157).

For semioticians, a sign must consist of two parts; the signifier and the signified. The word "cat", for example, the collection of letters or sounds, is the signifier, what it represents is the signified. In the meantime, in film, the signifier

and the signified are almost identical. “But in film, the signifier and the signified are almost identical, the sign of the cinema is the short-circuit sign. A picture of a book is much closer to a book, conceptually, than the word “book”. (Monaco, 2000:158).

Since the sign of cinema or movie is the short-circuit sign, it makes the language of movie difficult to discuss. We cannot modify the sign of cinema the way we can modify the sign of language. In cinema, the image of sun is an image of a sun, nothing more, nothing less. Whereas, in language, a sun can be modified into: sunny, sunshine, sunrise, sunlight and so forth.

D. Basic Elements of Cinematography

The movie is the artistic motion picture that is created in a sophisticated way. To support the understanding of the signs within the movie, we need to recognize the basic elements of cinematography. According to Bordwell and Thompson in their book entitled *Film Art: An Introduction* (477- 482), the basic elements of cinematography are explained below:

- **Meaning**
 - **Referential meaning** : Allusion to particular pieces of shared prior knowledge outside the film in which the viewer is expected to recognize
 - **Explicit meaning** : Significance presented overtly, usually in language and often near the film’s beginning and end

- **Implicit meaning** : Significance left tacit, for the viewer to discover upon analysis or reflection
- **Symptomatic meaning** : Significance which the film divulges, often “against its will” by the virtue of its historical or social context

- **Form** : The general system of relationship among the parts of a film
 - **Abstract Form** : A type of filmic organization in which the parts relate to each other through repetition and variation of such visual qualities as shape, color, rhythm, and direction of movement
 - **Associational Form** : A type of organization in which the film’s parts are juxtaposed to suggest similarities, contrasts, concepts, emotions, and expressive qualities.
 - **Categorical Form** : A type of filmic organization in which the parts treat distinct subset of a topic. For example, a film about the United States might be organized into fifty parts, each devoted to a single state.

- **Genres** : Various types of films which audiences and filmmakers recognize by their familiar narrative conventions. Common genres are musical, gangster and western films.
- **Ideology** : A relative coherent system of values, beliefs, or ideas shared by some social group and often taken for granted as natural or inherently true.

- **Plot** : A series of dramatic events or actions that make up a film's narrative
- **Flashback plot** : A filmic technique that alters the natural order of the narrative; a flashback may often be the entire film; it takes the story order back chronologically in time to a previous or past event, scene, or sequence that took place prior to the present time frame of the film; the flashbacked story that provides background on action and events is often called the back story; contrast to flash-forward
- **Flash-forward/ flash ahead:** 1. An alternation of story order in which the plot presentation moves forward to future events, then returns to the present. 2. Simply put, the opposite of flashback; a filmic technique that depicts a scene, event or shot taking place (or imagined) or expected that is projected into a future time beyond the present time of the film, or it can be a flash-forward from the past to the present (<http://www.filmsite.org/filmterms4.html>, cited on September 15, 2008 at 3:55 pm)
- **Story** : In a narrative film, all the event that we see and hear, plus all those that we infer or assume to have occurred, arranged in their presumed causal reactions, chronological order, duration, frequency, and spatial locations.
- **Theme** : The central characteristic, idea, concern or motif in a film.
- **Character** : The fictitious or real individual in a story, performed by an actor; also called players

- **Motivation** : The justification given in the film for the presence of an element. This may be an appeal to the viewer's knowledge of the real world, to genre convention, to narrative causality, or to a stylistic pattern within the film.
- **Titles** : The words that appear on the film screen and convey information; categories of titles include: credit titles, main titles, end titles, insert titles, and subtitles; a creeper title, also known as a roll-up title, refers to a film title that appears to move slowly across the screen - vertically or horizontally; in silent film, "titles"
- **Frame** : A single image on the strip of film
- **Angle of framing** : The position of the frame in relation to the subject is shown: above it, looking down (a high angle); horizontal, on the same level (a straight-on angle); looking up (a low angle). Angle of framing is also camera angle.
- **Shot** : The basic building block or unit of film narrative; refers to a single, constant take made by a motion picture camera uninterrupted by editing, interruptions or cuts, in which a length of film is exposed by turning the camera on, recording, and then turning the camera off; it can also refer to a single film frame (such as a still image);
- **Medium shot** : a framing in which the scale of the object shown is of moderate size, a human figure seen from the waist up would fill most of the screen

- **Long shot** : A framing in which the scale of the object shown is small; a standing human figure would appear nearly the height of the screen
- **Medium long shot** : A framing at a distance which makes an object about four or five feet high appear to fill most of the screen vertically.
- **Extreme long shot** : A framing in which the scale of the object shown is very small, a building, landscape or crowd of people would fill the screen
- **Close up** : A framing in which the scale of the object shown is relatively large; most commonly a person's head seen from the neck up, or an object of a comparable size that fills most of the screen
- **Medium close up** : A framing in which the scale of the object shown is fairly large; a human figure seen from the chest up would fill most of the screen.
- **Extreme close up** : A framing in which the scale of the object shown is very large, most commonly, a small object or a part of the body.
- **Reverse shot** : Two or more shots edited together that alternate characters, typically in a conversation situation.
- **Crane shot** : A shot with a change in framing accomplished by having the camera above the ground and moving through the air in any direction.

- **Establishing shot** : A shot , usually involving a distant framing, that shows the spatial relations among the important figures, objects, and setting in a scene
- **Following shot** : A shot with framing that shifts to keep a moving figure onscreen.
- **Tracking shot** : A mobile framing that travels through space forward, backward, or laterally.
- **Pan** : A camera movement with the camera body turning to the right or left. On the screen, it produces a mobile framing which scans the space horizontally.
- **Tilt** : A camera movement with the camera body swiveling upward or downward on a stationary support.
- **Editing** : 1. In filmmaking, the task of selecting and joining camera takes. 2. In the finished film, the set of techniques that governs the relations among shots
- **Cut** : In filmmaking, the joining of two strips of film together with a splice. 2. in the finished film, an instantaneous change from one framing to another.
- **Cheat Cut** : In the continuity editing system, a cut which presents continuous time from shot to shot but which mismatches the position of figures or objects
- **Jump Cut** : An elliptical cut that appears to be an interruption of a single shot. Either the figures seem to change instantly against a constant

background, or the background changes instantly while the figures remain constant.

- **Cross Cutting** : Editing that alternates shots of two or more lines of action occurring in different places, usually simultaneously.
- **Cut In** : an instantaneous shift from a distant framing to a closer view of some portion of the same space.
- **Contrast** : In cinematography, the difference between the brightest and darkest areas within the frame.
- **Sound and sound effects** : The audio portion of a film including dialogue, music, and effects; **sound effects** refers to all created sounds except dialogue or music
- **Diegetic sound** : Any voice, musical passage, or sound effect presented as originating from a source within the film's world
 - **External Diegetic sound** : Sound represented as coming from a physical source within the story space and which we assume the character in the scene also hear.
 - **Internal Diegetic sound** : Sound represented as coming from the mind of the character within the story space. Although we and the character can hear it, we assume that the other characters cannot.
- **Non Diegetic sound** : Sound, such as mood music or a narrator's commentary, represented as coming from a source outside the space of the narrative.

- **Direct sound** : Music, noise, and speech recorded from the event at the moment of filming
- **Off screen** : Simultaneous sound from a source assumed to be in the space of the scene but in an area outside what is visible on screen
- **Duration** : In a narrative film, the aspect of temporal manipulation that involves the time span presented in the plot and assumed to operate in the story.
- **Mise-en Scene** : All the elements placed in front of the camera to be photographed such as the settings and props, lighting, costumes and make-up, and figure behaviour.
- **Setting** : The time (time period) and place in which the film's story occurs, including all of the other additional factors, including climate (season), landscape, people, social structures and economic factors, customs
- **Lighting** : The illumination of a scene, and the manipulation of light and shadows by the cinematographer.
- **key lighting** : In the three point lighting system, the brightest illumination coming into the scene
- **Back lighting** : Illumination cast onto the figures in the scene from the side opposite the camera, usually creating a thin outline of highlighting on those figures
- **Fill lighting** : Illumination a source less bright than the key light, used to soften deep shadows in a scene

- **Frontal lighting** : Illumination directed into the scene from a position near the camera
- **Hard lighting** : Illumination that creates sharp-edged shadows
- **Side lighting** : Lighting coming from one side of a person or object usually in order to create a sense of volume, to bring out surface tensions, or to fill in areas left shadowed by light from another source
- **Soft lighting** : Illumination that avoids harsh bright and dark areas, creating a gradual transition from highlighting to shadows
- **Top lighting** : Lighting coming from above a person or object, usually in order to outline the upper areas of the figure or to separate it more clearly from the background.
- **Costume** : The garments or clothing worn by actors/performers in a film; a costume (or wardrobe) designer researches, designs, and selects the costumes to be appropriate to the film's time period, the characters, their location, and their occupations
- **Make Up** : The materials that are used to prepare the performer for his/her respective role(s) before the camera, anywhere from facial pancake to elaborate costuming, latex masks, and other ghastly transformations; the makeup department is headed by a makeup artist
- **POV (Point Of View)** : A shot from the perspective of one of the characters, as if the audience were seeing the scene from their eyes
(<http://www.zpub.com/sf/history/>, cited on September 15 2008, at 4.10 pm)

- **Scene** : A segment in a narrative film that takes place in one time and space or that uses crosscutting to show two or more simultaneous actions
- **Fade in** : A dark screen that gradually brightens as a shot appears

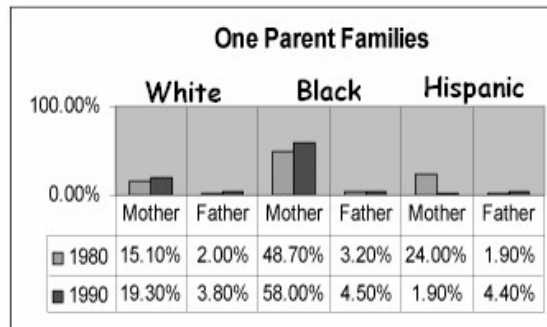
E. The Social Condition of American Society in the Early 1980s

The decade of 1980s was also recognized as the transitional period for the American society where inventions of technology had gradually altered the character of the society. The society's employment and skill had steadily changed from the industrial to service sectors such as doctor, insurance and government employee, teacher, clerk and so forth. Service sector activities were benefited from the newest invention of home computer making the works much faster and easier.

The population patterns had undergone many changes. Many immigrants came to the United States in a purpose to search for a better way of living. Most of them were the Vietnamese refugees who came to this country aftermath the war in 1975. They commonly stayed in California and Hawaii, and worked as fishermen or labors in fishing industries. The household composition also changed quite significantly. The percentage of family households declined while the family "nonfamily" household increased. Many spouses agreed to live together without a marital status.

In 1980 the percentage of family households dropped; a quarter of all groups were now classified as "nonfamily households" in which two or more unrelated persons lived together. (Cincotta, 366:1992).

Furthermore, the rates of single family also increased as shown in the diagram below:



(<http://kclibrary.lonestar.edu/decade80.html>, cited on June 15th 2009, at 09.12 am)

It can be seen from the diagram that single parent families were dominated by the black people.

Moreover, the epidemic named AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) was discovered during the period. This deadly disease attacks human body's system immune and can be infected through sexual intercourse and blood. This disease commonly attacks the homosexual men and drug users.

The economic condition in early 1980s decreased as a result of the economic recession. This recession marked the early years of Ronald Reagan's presidency; hitting all sections of the country including housing, steel manufacturing, automobile production, farming and so forth. It was the most serious recession since the Great Depression in 1930 which began on July 1981 and ended on November 1982. Stagflation (Stagnation and inflation) started afflicting the economy of the United States as the result of 1973 oil crisis and

1979 energy crisis. In the mean time, inflation rates increased to 13, 5 % and unemployment rates soared to 7.5 % at the end of 1981.

A mild recession from January to July 1980 kept unemployment high, but despite economic recovery unemployment remained at historically high levels (about 7.5%) through the end of 1981... by 1979, inflation reached startling 11.3% and in 1980 soared to 13.5%.

(<http://investment-blog.net/us-double-digits-unemployment-rate-of-1980-1981-vs-2008-2009-single-digit/>, cited on June 15th 2009, at 10.22 am)

In addition, the economic recession also gave impacts to the collapse of the economic sectors such as banking, automobile and farming. In one hand, there were many companies which eventually declined the number of workers due to the lack of budget while on the other hands, many decided to stop operating their works for a moment. The impacts of this situation were many people lost their jobs and many more depended their lives on the social welfare. Farmers also suffered hard times since the increase of oil price raised the farm costs and eventually reduced the demand of farm productions.

To overcome the high economic recession, Ronald Reagan made economic policies (which later on called as Reaganomics) as a way to solve the soared inflation. Reagan believed that government intruded too deeply into American life. Therefore, he cut programs which were no longer needed by American society. He sought large tax cuts to stimulate greater consumer spending, saving and investment.

Undeniably, the recession happened in the early of 1980s had increased the number of poor people in the United States. Unemployment, homelessness and panhandling had emerged in the United States as the face of poverty. Many

people lost their jobs after being fired from the companies they used to work. The change in the economic structure of America worsened the already grave situation of America's poor. Indeed, the shift from industrial to service job in 1980 had limited the opportunity for those who had less skill. "The move from factory jobs to service-oriented jobs has decreased the availability of employment for workers who do not have transferable job skills (skills acquired during life activities that are transferable and applicable to other occupations) and who may be less educated." (Levinson, 2004: 4).

As the number of unemployment increased, the homelessness also spread across the American landscape. Almost in all big cities in the United States, like: Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, the tramps and beggars lived without any shelter. As said by Chris Gardner in his biography entitled "the Pursuit of Happyness":

Pada dekade itu, di San Francisco mulai terjadi konflik masyarakat akibat bertambahnya populasi gelandangan. Wabah tunawisma telah meluas dan berkembang sebagai akibat dari beberapa faktor, antara lain keputusan pemotongan drastis anggaran pemerintah. Para gelandangan juga ditemukan di area-area parker, terminal mobil umum, stasiun kereta api, kolong-kolong jembatan, serta di jalan-jalan masuk bangunan publik. (Gardner translated by Yoga, 8-9: 2007).

Most of these poor people became tramps since they could not afford for a proper shelter. To some extent, this condition emerged because the cost of housing was enormously high especially for the poor to afford. Homelessness is directly related to the availability of low-rent housing. Whereas the need for an affordable housing has increased, the availability of low-rent housing and government-subsidized housing has decreased. To overcome these problems,

many charity organizations were established in order to give a proper shelter for the tramps and beggars. Moreover, there were also many members of churches who were voluntarily dedicated themselves to serve the needy by providing an emergency shelter and meal.

F. Historical Background of Black American in the United States

The development of American history cannot be separated by the existence of the two world races, black and white. The presence of the black people in the English colonies in the New World had given huge contribution toward the economic and social development of the society. The existence of the black people in the United States has started long before this nation was established. These black people faced many painful experiences during their presence in the United States. The prejudice, discrimination or unequal treatments are common things that have always been faced by the black people since the early of the settlement until the present.

The history noted that the black people came to the North America in 1619, as the indentured servants. The indentured servant is the worker who will be paid after working for several years. At that time, the Jamestown colonists lacked of labor to cultivate the land, clear the field, plant crops and so on. After the serving period was over, many of those indentured servants were freed and had a right to own the farms or lands. However, many of the freed indentured servants lived in the poverty after they got their freedom. They did not have enough money to buy

the property and fulfill their daily needs. They became the under-classed people in the society.

Gradually, the status of the indentured servants changed in the year of 1640 when the Virginia court had sentenced at least one black servant as a slave. Actually, the English colonies in the New World did not have any tradition of slavery before. Moreover, they believed that their race was superior to other race such as black people. As what puritan people believed, the puritan was regarded as chosen people and they were blessed by having the fair skin. "The English believed firmly in the superiority of their values and civilization, especially when compared to the native cultures of Africa and North America. Furthermore, they believed that fair skinned peoples like themselves were superior to the darker skinned races"(Norton, 1986: 33). This belief eventually made the English settlers justify the slavery.

Discrimination toward the slaves continuously happened in their daily lives. Even though they were regarded as property, but they should be punished whenever they committed a crime. They were not regarded as human, but as property and their children would automatically belonged to their owners. Slaves were considered legal non persons except if they committed crimes.

In fact, the slavery in the English colonies at that time was physically cruel but the worst misery they felt was the loss of individual freedom as human being. "The worst evil of American Slavery was not its physical cruelty but the fact of slavery itself: coercion, loss of freedom, belonging to another person" (Norton, 1986:265).

During the 1770s and 80s, the American colonists fought for their freedom against Britain. They yelled the spirit of freedom, equality and democracy for its citizen. The sentiment during the American Revolution eventually raised the awareness of slavery as the social evil and should be abolished.

In 1863, the United States president, Abraham Lincoln issued the emancipation proclamation, declaring that slaves in states were free. Freedom of all slaves came later in 1865 when the Union (Northern states) won the war over the Confederation (Southern states).

When the war ended, the congress passed The Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution, which completely abolished the practice of slavery. Another amendment, The 14th, gave blacks full citizenship. Many blacks hoped that blacks and whites could live together in the harmony and tolerance without prejudice and racial discrimination. But the local laws and customs were used to deprive blacks of voting right. The Fourteenth Amendment gave the opportunity for the black men to vote but it ignored female citizen. In addition, there was also a new threat by the whites which against the freedom of the slaves. The existence of Ku Klux Klan terrorism had threatened the freedom and security of blacks' lives. Ku Klux Klan was a terrorism conducted by whites to intimidate and oppress the blacks. Many of Ku Klux Klan members came to the black's house and robbed the black's properties, kicking the family members and even killed them. Worse, the prosecutions of the Klan members rarely succeeded and it caused more suffer and anxieties among the blacks.

Since the slavery was abolished, the blacks had more opportunity to obtain more appropriate treatments from the whites even though the stereotypes and racial discrimination of blacks remained lingering to the white society. The existence of schools for blacks emerged since the post civil war. In fact, the blacks, whatever their age, hungered for the knowledge and sciences. They kept on enthusiastic to study at school even though the classroom was less appropriate than classroom of whites.

In fact, the abolition of slavery had altered their legal status, but it did not improve their economic and social opportunities to those of whites. Many of southern black lived in poverty. They found that conditions under freedom left them with the same disadvantages they had borne under slavery. “ In 1880, some 90 percent of all southern blacks depended for a living on farming or personal and domestic service- the same occupations they had had as slaves” (Norton, 1986: 474). With slavery dead, whites had to find the newest way to keep and oppress the blacks in a position of inferiority.

Racial discrimination also lingered in the social affair with the whites. In 1877, the system of racial discrimination arose by the existence of Segregation Law or Jim Crow Law. Jim Crow Law was the name of the racial caste system, which operated primarily during 1877 until 1960s. This racial law obligated the black to be separated from the whites in public services. With countless daily reminders of the black's inferior status, this law restricted the blacks to separate drinking and toilet facilities, busses and other public transportations, schools,

churches, hospitals, cemeteries and so forth. This law was continuously applied until the mid of 1960s.

In the early of the 19th century, many of blacks migrated to the northern states to get better lives. The factors that contributed the blacks to migrate to the north were

- The intensity of the racism in the south
- The higher wages in the northern industries' salaries compared to southern industries
- Better health care in the North
- More job vacancies in the north compared to the South

Most of black immigrants established settlement in a group. They lived in the slum area, which were occupied by the black immigrants. At the same time, they also established black churches, clubs, and social and civil organizations. In the 1930s, the Great Depression attacked the United States economy. Many industries were bankrupt and they fired most of their labors. Moreover, this condition caused more misery to the blacks since the businessmen tended to employ the whites rather than the blacks.

The segregation law which was still applied until the mid of the 1950s had made the black leaders felt discriminated. On December 1, 1955, black woman named Rosa Park was arrested since she refused to give her seat to a white person on a city bus. This action stimulated the black people to do a boycott for the equality which was led by the black pastor named Martin Luther King Jr. The aim

of this boycott was to protest the segregation of blacks and whites on public bus. The boycott eventually succeeded and it was resounded to all parts of the country.

King continued to conduct civil right campaign throughout the country. Tragically, on April 4 1968, King was assassinated by white person in Memphis Tennessee. King's assassination had caused the riots in several cities in the United States.

Post Civil Rights era, blacks have significantly improved their social and economic standing. The blacks could also get more access in achieving higher education and employment. Moreover, increasing numbers of blacks are playing important roles in American life nowadays such as Oprah Winfrey, the famous richest Black American of the 20th century and Barrack Obama, the president of the United States. Nevertheless, today, the racial discrimination and prejudice still linger in American society, especially whites. Many of blacks are disadvantaged by the treatment of the society. There are still poor, all-black areas in American cities. The average income is lower than that of whites and unemployment among young black men is higher than that of whites. In 2004, African American workers had the second-highest [median](#) earnings of American [minority](#) groups after [Asian Americans](#), and African Americans had the highest level of male-female income parity of all ethnic groups in the United States. Also, among American [minority groups](#), only [Asian Americans](#) were more likely to hold [white-collar](#) occupations (management, professional, and related fields), and African Americans were no more or less likely than European Americans to work in the service industry. Today, blacks in the United States still struggle for equal

treatments from the society which has not been accomplished after the civil right era.

G. The Phrase of the Pursuit of Happiness

1. The Origin of the Pursuit of Happiness

There are no two documents more important than the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution in the history of American society. These two documents express the American ideals of freedom such as freedom of speech, freedom of tyranny, freedom from unreasonable government, and many more. They show how important the freedom or liberty for every human being. As stated in the preamble of the Declaration of Independence, God endowed the human beings with unalienable rights such as right of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.
(<http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/index.htm>, cited on July 05th 2009, 10:55 am)

In this preamble, the phrase of the pursuit of happiness is the most famous among all. Happiness is mentioned specifically in the declaration, an addition that becomes unusual and seems odd. Thomas Jefferson did not provide an explanation for the meaning and the origin of this phrase so we can just interpret based on our thinking and assumption.

When Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, the draft he sent to the congress was too much longer, and the original draft was heavily edited by the committee. One phrase that was in both original and final versions is “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”. Many scholars assumed that Jefferson’s intention to mention this phrase was influenced by the thought of the English philosopher named John Locke. Indeed Thomas Jefferson was interested in Locke’s ideas and thoughts. In Locke’s journal entitled *Two Treaties on Government* (1690) he wrote:

Man being born, as has been proved, with a title to perfect freedom and an uncontrolled enjoyment of all the rights and privileges of the law of Nature, equally with any other man, or number of men in the world, hath by nature a power not only to preserve his property—that is, his life, liberty, and estate.

(<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1690locke-sel.html>, cited on 17th July 2009, at 11.15 am)

When we pay notice to this writing, we can see that Locke does not mention happiness. Clearly, Jefferson took the concept of the right of life and liberty and applied it in the declaration of independence. No one is certain where the phrase of “the pursuit of happiness” came from, Thomas Jefferson never said. Interestingly, this phrase was not also used by Thomas Jefferson at that time. A British political observer named Samuel Johnson used the phrase “pursuit of happiness” in his essay entitled “the false alarm”. But it is more likely the phrase the pursuit of happiness was derived from John Locke’s thought. In 1690, Locke wrote an essay entitled *concerning human understanding*. In that essay, he wrote:

The necessity of **pursuing** true **happiness** is the foundation of liberty. As therefore the highest perfection of intellectual nature lies in a careful and constant pursuit of true and solid happiness;

...the stronger ties we have to an unalterable **pursuit of happiness** is general;
(<http://hnn.us/articles/46460.html>, cited on 17th July 2009, at 11.55 am)

In the writing above, it showed that Locke precisely used the same phrase as Jefferson did in the declaration of independence.

2. The Meaning of the Pursuit of Happiness

The definition of happiness is wholly subjective depending on every individual's perspective. For some people, having a luxurious car or a huge mansion can make them happy, whereas for some other people, getting married and having a family can make them happy. Thus Thomas Jefferson never gave any explanation of what happiness really was. In the Declaration of Independence, it was stated that the pursuit of happiness is an inalienable right given by their Creator or God. Inalienable rights refer to the category of natural rights that we cannot give up or transfer to another. Life and liberty are the inalienable rights since we would be harmed if someone took our life and liberty away. In the Declaration of Independence, the word "pursuit" is used as a noun, which means our occupation or employment, or what we do. So the pursuit of happiness is the occupation of finding happiness. Everyone has a right to the pursuit of happiness which means a man is free to do anything he pleases, as long as he does not infringe someone else's right. In conclusion, the pursuit of happiness is an alienable right since if someone denied us the ability to act with respect to our desire for happiness, we would be harmed.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS

This chapter is focused in analyzing the problem statement that has been formulated in the previous chapter. In this analysis, the researcher attempts to describe in detail about how myth of material success is reflected by Chris Gardner in his dialogues, attitudes and way of thinking.

There are two main characters in this movie, Chris Gardner (Will Smith) and Christopher (Jaden Smith). Since Christopher is portrayed as a five year old boy, his character does not give a huge contribution toward the development of the movie related to the myth of material success itself. While, Chris Gardner is depicted as a real portrait of American man who really believes in the myth of material success and it is reflected through his way of thinking, attitude, and his action along the movie. Almost all parts of this movie describe about Chris Gardner's struggle in pursuing his real and true happiness.

The analysis starts with the simple discussion of the poster. As we can see through the poster below, the word happy is written in red color. Indeed, the using of red color in the word "happy" has a specific purpose. At a glance, the audience will give more attention to the word "happy" since the red color attracts more attention. At the second semiological system, red color is not merely a color but it is also a symbol of the courage and power.



http://www.impawards.com/2006/pursuit_of_happyness.html,
cited on July 24th 2010, at 8:15 pm)

In this discussion, the intention of the moviemaker in writing a word happy by using red color is because “happy” is something which must be struggled by the courage and power. God will not give happiness for somebody by free. It should be pursued and struggled with huge power and tireless encouragement. It also shows that for achieving Chris Gardner’s truly happiness, he should struggle very hard with the optimism, encouragement and power.

Within a movie, costume can also have specific function. It is not only a wardrobe but it can symbolize something more than just a dresscode. In this poster, it shows that Chris Gardner wears suit and tie. At the first semiological system, suit and tie are only a part of fashion. At the second semiological system, suit and tie represent the specific dress worn by a white-collar worker. Furthermore, they are not worn by any worker, but they are worn by the high class worker or white-collar worker. “Suit and tie are not just fashionable, they are

mandatory for businessmen. In fact the suit and tie have become a symbol or icon of the businessman” (<http://www.uow.edu.au/~sharonb/columns/probe13.html>, cited on October 03 2009, at 8.55 am). Moreover, working by wearing suit and tie shows the professionalism of the worker himself. As depicted in the poster, Chris Gardner wears suit and tie while bringing a density scanner in his right hand. For some people, density scanner’s seller is not a high class job. Indeed, Chris Gardner wants to show to the audience that he tries to become professional by wearing suit and tie, no matter what his job is.

The picture of Chris Gardner which holds his son’s hand depicts the strong bond of the father and son. It seems that Chris has a full responsibility for raising and guiding his son in facing the life. It also shows the affection which Christopher has for his father that is depicted when Christopher leans on his father’s arm and he is smiling. The light which is shown in the poster has also a specific meaning. The light is the symbol of the hope and the brighter future. It seems that Chris Gardner and his son are hand in hand for achieving the bright live in the future.

In fact, the title has an important meaning within a movie. The title is very significant since it conveys the message, theme and information from the moviemaker to the audiences. The title of the movie which is being discussed is “The Pursuit of Happyness”. For American people, the title is very familiar since it is also a part of the motto that can be found in the Declaration of Independence. In the preamble of the Declaration of Independence, it is stated that God endowed human being with the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. When we

put more notice to the title of the movie, we will realize that the word “happyness” is obviously not spelled correctly. Based on English dictionary, happiness is supposed to be spelled in I instead of Y. In fact, the misspelling of the word “happyness” in the movie has a huge meaning since it is made on purpose.

At a glance, the misspelling of the title will attract the curiosity of the audience to watch the movie. People will be interested in the title first, then watch. However there is deeper meaning in its misspelling. The misspelling signifies an element of what this movie is really about. Y at the word “happyness” denotes You and Your happiness. It is all about what makes You (Gardner and his son) happy. Since everyone has his own definition of happiness, this movie only describes about the struggle of Chris Gardner and his son in pursuing their own happiness, and it does not describe about the struggle of someone else’s happiness. This idea is also supported by the statement of the real figure of Chris Gardner in an interview related to the movie launching.

Interviewer : So Chris Gardner, you spelled happiness with the Y, what and why?

Chris Gardner : At the core term in my life and my son’s life, there was day-care service.

That became so very important was the spell with the Y. But the reason we left the Y in the title of the movie and importantly in the book, is that Y is to denote You and Your Happiness.

What makes You happy. Everybody is gonna have different definition of happiness.

So it is all about you and what makes you happy.

What makes you fulfill, what makes you

embrace your joy. That’s why we left the Y there

(<http://www.blingcheese.com/video-34/chris+gardner.htm>, cited on July 17th 2009, at 05:20 pm)

In addition, the word “happyness” is the spelling of the word which is obviously wrong. Indeed, the mistake of spelling “happyness” itself also represents about the condition of Chris Gardner’s life at the beginning of the movie. There is something wrong about Chris Gardner’s life at the beginning of the movie. In the first part of the movie, Chris Gardner is depicted as a man who lives in the lowest ladder of economy within his society. He is out of normal society he is supposed to be. Normal society in this case is when Chris Gardner is not supposed to live in poverty. Normal society is when he can live normally like other people in his surrounding. In fact, in this movie, Chris Gardner is obviously out of the normal society since he is dealing with his poverty, losing his wife after she abandoned him, being a single father for his son, obtaining for a job in the internship program, and being a homeless at the same time. These circumstances illustrate that Chris Gardner’s life is not normal.

Therefore, through this movie, the moviemaker attempts to show how happiness for Chris Gardner is supposed to be. The right spelling of the word happiness is by using an I instead of a Y. So the core of this movie is all about how Chris Gardner is struggling to revise the happyness spelled with a Y to happiness spelled with an I. It is about how Chris Gardner is struggling to change his life as a part of abnormal society to be a part of normal society.

In American perspective, happiness is usually associated with material comforts. Many people feel happy when they own much money, a luxurious car, or a mansion. Eventually happiness is seen as a material state rather than an emotional state. Since people live in the materialistic world, where the success is

measured by how much money they have, they then posit their own happiness to the material comforts they can possess. Indeed, the existence of money is very important and fundamental in achieving the happiness. A person cannot be fully happy as long as his fundamental and basic needs have not been satisfied yet. Thus, everyone will struggle very hard with every single thing he is possibly done to fulfill his basic needs. In this movie, in achieving his happiness to become a part of normal society, Chris Gardner has to work very hard in gaining money to fulfill his basic needs that should be accomplished such as his needs of proper shelter, enough food, steady job, and enough money in his pocket.

In this thesis, the researcher analyzed how the myth of material success reflected by the main character, Chris Gardner, based on five basic beliefs or motifs as follows: 1) American democracy allows its citizen to rise above any limitations into which they may have been born; 2) hard work brings riches and physical comforts; 3) these rewards come to those who are deserving of them (virtuous) and who; 4) have the drive and ambition to attain them plus 5) a modicum of good luck.

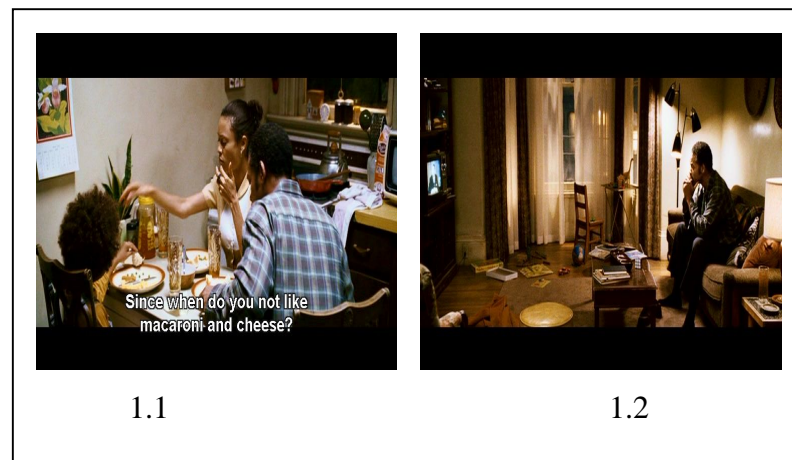
1. American democracy allows its citizen to rise above any limitations into which they may have been born

America is the land of endless opportunity. This belief has embedded in the mindset of most of American people and many other immigrants who try to gain the success in this country. Everyone who is born in the limited condition has the same opportunity in achieving his success and he is allowed

to pursue it in his own way as long as he does not infringe someone else's right. It is a part of democracy.

Democracy is obviously interrelated with rights to equality and non-discrimination. In the preamble of the Declaration of Independence, it is clearly stated that God endowed human being with the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Since the pursuit of happiness is the alienable right given by God, every citizen in America has the equal right and opportunity to eliminate any limitation in his life. A man who is born into poverty, non WASPs, can have the equal chance to posit a seat in the legislative council or presidency as long as he wants to work hard to gain it. Hardworking, can change someone from rag to riches, from zero to hero, and cross any limitation he has.

In this movie, Chris Gardner was depicted as an American man who was born with many limitations. In American society, he was obviously marginalized by his poverty, and education background. He earned money by selling portable bone-density scanner from one hospital to another while his wife worked double shift as a laundry girl to support the finance of her family. In a month, he at least had to be able to sell two scanners for paying the apartment rent and the daycare for his son, Christopher. His poverty could be seen by the condition of the cheap apartment he rented for staying with his family as depicted in the scenes below.



The figure 1.1 was taken by using the medium shot to portray the condition of Chris Gardner and his family in the dining room. The scene was taken by using medium shot because the moviemaker wanted to show how narrow Chris Gardner's dining room was. His dining table was sited in the middle of his narrow kitchen and obviously they did not have more space to move. The figure 1.2 was taken by using the long shot to capture the entire room where Chris Gardner was staying in. The room of his apartment which was so simple and less of household furnishing indicated that he was not wealthy enough to afford the furnishing. The soft lighting emphasized more about the gloomy feeling of the room. Indeed, the soft lighting did not only show about the gloominess of the room, but it somehow captured the sense of the gloominess that Chris Gardner felt because of his poverty.

The poverty that Chris Gardner faced was also described by the dialogues done by Chris Gardner and his wife, Linda, in the kitchen after dinner.

Linda : Did you pay the taxes?

Chris Gardner : No, I'm gonna have to file an extension
Linda : You already filed an extension...
Chris Gardner : Yeah, well, I gotta file another one.
That's... it's \$ 650. I'll have it in the next
month.
Linda : That means interest, right? and a penalty?
Chris Gardner : Yeah, a little bit
Look, why don't you let me do this?
All right, just relax. Okay?
(DVD, minutes 00:07:38)

Paying taxes is an obligation of every citizen to the government, including Chris Gardner. Through the dialogues above, it seemed that Chris Gardner did not have enough money to pay the taxes to the government. Thus he had to file the extension for paying it later. As the consequence, he had to pay the interest and the penalty of the taxes for its extension. It deliberately showed that his financial condition was not secure enough and he was obviously dealing with lack of money.

In 1981 when this movie was set, the American government was in fact dealing with the economic recession and it was the worst since the Great Depression in 1930s. Through this movie, the moviemaker also described about the economic recession in that decade which worsened the financial condition of Chris Gardner. Here was the quotation taken from the scene when Reagan delivered the speech on TV, reporting about the economic recession that attacked the economy of America in 1981.

A few days ago I was presented with a report I'd asked for a comprehensive audit, if you will, of our economic condition. You won't like it, I didn't like it. But we have to face the truth and then go to work to turn things around. And make no mistake about it. We can turn them around. The federal budget is out of control. And we face runaway deficits of almost \$80 billion for this budget year that ends September 30th. That

deficit is larger than the entire federal budget in 1957. And so is the almost \$80 billions we will pay in interest this year in national dept. twenty years ago, in 1960 our federal government payroll was less than \$ 13 billion. Today is 75 billion. (DVD, minutes 00:08:23)

The quotation above showed that government was overcoming the huge national debt. The citizen could not longer depend on the social welfare that used to be done in the previous years. The government could only urge the citizens to keep on working to change things around. Chris Gardner as a part of the society could not count on the government's help for overcoming his financial insecurity. Somehow he had to deal with it without any assistance and he had to work hard by himself.

The limitation in his life was not only depicted through his poverty. He was also presented as a less-educated man. He never went to college and he just graduated from modest high school in Louisiana in which one class only consisted of twenty students.

In fact, being poor and less educated did not stop his eagerness to achieve his dream. Once, he met a well-dressed man driving a luxurious car, Ferrari. That man's outlook has astonished Chris Gardner, and eventually he wondered in what way that man could possess that luxurious car.

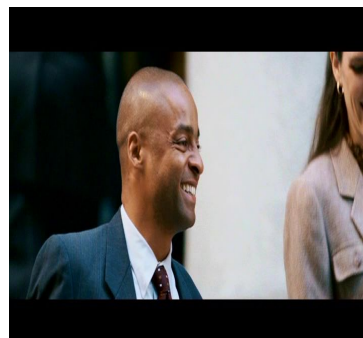
Chris Gardner	: Man I got two questions for you. What do you do? And how do you do it?
Ferrari owner	: I'm a stockbroker
Chris Gardner	: Stockbroker, Oh Goodness Had to go to college to be a stockbroker, huh?
Ferrari owner	: You don't have to. Have to be good in numbers and good with people.

(DVD, Minutes 00:09:37)

The short conversation done by Chris Gardner and the Ferrari owner inspired Chris Gardner to achieve his dream in the way that had never been imagined before. Stockbroker was still something weird for Chris Gardner. He used to think that the only way escaping from his financial insecurity was by selling his bone density scanner. Although he obviously did not know what kind of stockbroker job was and how he ran this job, he really wanted to try it. The catchy outlook performance of the Ferrari owner and the smiley faces of stockbrokers walking out from the brokerage building motivated him to grasp the higher dream to be a stockbroker.



2.1



2.2



2.3

The figure 2.1 showed Chris Gardner who was staring at the people walking out from the stock exchange building. The medium shot was used to portray the situation and the activity in the front yard of the building. Chris Gardner wondered when he could be a part of those people. The figure 2.2 and 2.3 portrayed some stockbrokers walking out from the building. These two figures used the close up shot to point out the smiley face of them. Somehow they illustrated the happiness in their face which was indicated by their smile. Smile is a facial expression that expresses amusement, pleasure and happiness. Through these pictures, the moviemaker wanted to create an expression of happiness of those who worked there as stockbroker. They seemed so happy working as stockbroker. The happiness that those stockbrokers felt was also shown by Chris Gardner's thought below:

I still remember that moment
They all looked so damn happy to me
Why couldn't I look like that?
(DVD, minutes 00:10:17)

Being a stockbroker seemed like a gate for walking out from his poverty. After the man said that to become a stockbroker did not have to go to college, Chris Gardner came to believe that he definitely could do the same thing as the man did. He was sure that he had the same opportunity as that man did. For being a stockbroker, he had just to be good in numbers and good with people.

This spirit that Chris Gardner felt was merely the same with the spirit of American dream. Hundreds of years ago, many immigrants came to the United States of America for gaining success. They came to the country

without any ideas of what they were going to be. The belief that America was the land of endless opportunity had attracted them to come. They just believed that everyone in the United States of America has the same chance to achieve success and prosperity.

The dialogues above showed about the American democracy which allows its citizen to rise above the limitation to be whoever he/she wanted to be. In spite of his poverty and education background, he could be whoever he wanted to be. In America, everything is possible. The poor is possible to change his life to be the riches as long as she/he wants to work hard for it.

2 Hard work brings riches and physical comfort

The success as well as happiness does not come easily to somebody without any effort. A man would never know whether he was destined to be a successful person or not. This insecurity stimulates the common sense of someone that the only way for finding out whether he was chosen as a successful person or not is by hard working. Eventually, hard working is used as a means by which a man can change his fate.

The measurement of success changes time to time. In the twentieth century, the measurement of success was signified by the riches and the material comforts. The person would be regarded as a successful person if he could possess a lot of dollar, fancy cars, mansions in suburban and so forth.

The second motif in the myth of material success is that hard work brings riches and physical comforts. In this movie, Chris Gardner eventually reaped the success after his long restless struggle that he had done. Moreover,

the success that Chris Gardner obtained was illustrated in the last part of the movie.

After beginning his career at Dean Witter, Chris Gardner went on to found the investment firm Gardner Rich in 1987. In 2006, Chris Gardner sold a minority stake in his brokerage firm in a multi-billion dollar deal. (DVD, minutes 01:53:20)

Long before he became a CEO of Gardner Rich brokerage firm, he started his career as a stockbroker from the zero point without any assistance of anyone. With the spirit of success and hard working, Chris Gardner started learning how he could become a stockbroker in spite of his lack of education background and experience in the brokerage firm.

Through this analysis, the researcher would like to show how hard working can change Chris Gardner's life from the poverty into the abundance of riches. At the beginning of the movie, Chris Gardner started his life story by saying "This is part of my life story, this part is called riding the bus" (DVD, minutes 00:05:07). Riding the bus somehow had deeper meaning in this movie. At the beginning of the story, Chris Gardner was depicted as a man who traveled from one place to another place by riding the bus. Bus was a public transportation that was cheap and it could contain many passengers. The passengers of the bus moreover represented their social status in the society. Since it was cheap, it showed that bus was only ridden by a person with low income. Someone who had much money would prefer to ride taxi or his own car instead of bus. His narration above eventually reflected the real condition of Chris Gardner at the beginning of the movie, as a poor person or a low class person in the society.

As a part of American society, Chris Gardner more or less shared the same values and beliefs which were professed by many other American people. Although everyone had his own definition of what happiness was, Chris Gardner saw the success in the same parameter as many other American people did. One day, he was so astonished by the Red Ferrari which was being parked in front of a brokerage firm.



3.1



3.2

The way Chris Gardner saw that Ferrari car showed that he was only one of ordinary American men who saw the Ferrari car as a symbol of success. In popular culture, red Ferrari has become an icon of the myth of material success. Only few people who possess much money are able to buy this luxurious car. Indeed, an icon of the myth of material success is reflected by the fancy stuffs owned by the people.

The car was being parked was not an ordinary one; it was a luxurious car. It was a Ferrari car. At the first semiological system, Ferrari is a brand of car assembled in Italy. At the second semiological system, this car was able

to represent more values, which are the wealth and the success. When we hear someone talking about "Ferrari" the first thing that comes to mind is money.

Today, Ferrari is a symbol of wealth among those who possess such outstanding driving machines. Price tags on these vehicles as we all know, are equivalent to full mortgages and in some cases even more. This company has been known by its active participation in Formula One racing where it has earned great status throughout the years of success. (<http://www.articlesbase.com/technology-articles/ferrari-the-ultimate-driving-machine-229841.html>, cited on October 05 2009, at 7:55 am)

Moreover, the colour of the Ferrari shown in this movie also signifies the deeper meaning. The red colour of the car symbolized the power, bravery and struggle. In this movie, the red Ferrari did not only symbolize the wealth but it also symbolized the power and struggle. Chris Gardner realized that he did not only need money to own the car but he also needed power, struggle and bravery to own it.

Figure 3.1 showed Chris Gardner who was so amazed looking at that Ferrari car. The moviemaker used the long shot to grasp the picture of the car and how Chris Gardner seemed so amazed looking at that car. The high angle camera was used to create the sense of luxury of the car that Chris Gardner was looking at. It somehow proved that Chris Gardner was only an American man who also regarded the success of the person based on the luxurious stuff he could possess. In the figure 3.2, the moviemaker attempted to show how fancy that car was compared to the others by using extreme long shot. From the long distance, that Ferrari car looked more attractive compared to the other cars which were being parked next to it. Besides, the place where this red

Ferrari was being parked also represented the prestige of the owner. By using the extreme long shot, the moviemaker did not only portray the fanciness of the red Ferrari car but he also attempted to portray the clear picture of the background, that was the brokerage building. Overall, through the figure 3.2, the moviemaker tried to create the impression that the red Ferrari signified the owner of the car who worked in the prestigious place.

The moment when Chris Gardner met the Ferrari owner, influenced and inspired him to grasp the higher dream. He came to believe that he could change his life by being the stockbroker in spite of his education background. The idea for being the stockbroker seemed so silly for someone else, including his wife, Linda. She thought that being a stockbroker was a backward movement to Chris Gardner's career compared with his present job as a bone-density scanner seller.

Chris Gardner	: I'm gonna try to get home by six I'm gonna stop by a brokerage firm after work
Linda	: For what?
Chris Gardner	: I wanna see about a job there
Linda	: Yeah, what job?
Chris Gardner	: You know when I was a kid; I could go through a math book in a week. So I'm gonna go see about what job they got down there.
Linda	: What job?
Chris Gardner	: Stockbroker
Linda	: Stockbroker?
Chris Gardner	: Yeah
Linda	: Not an astronaut

(DVD, minutes 00:11:09)

At first, Linda felt a little excitement when Chris Gardner said that he would like to take an opportunity to find another job. When she knew that he

would like to apply for a job as a stockbroker, she suddenly felt very disappointed. She just thought that being a stockbroker was a joke, as she compared it with the job as an astronaut. According to her, Chris Gardner was just daydreaming to work as a stockbroker because it was out-of-reach work. Being a stockbroker was not quite common in that era. She thought that selling the bone-density scanner was more realistic than being a stockbroker.

In spite of the lack of his wife's support, Chris Gardner did not lose the spirit to try being a stockbroker. He made up his mind to take an internship program in Dean Witter brokerage firm. The fact that he might have a very limited chance to be accepted there because of his education background did not stop him to try.

The program took just 20 people every six month. One has a job. There were three blank lines after "high school" to list more education. I didn't need that many lines.
(DVD, minute 00:15:12)

Through that narration, it could be seen that Chris Gardner actually had a limited chance to work in that brokerage firm. There were only three seats for the applicants with the high school graduate. From 20 apprentices, there would be one hired as a stockbroker. It means that he has to compete with 17 people who had higher education background and 2 other people who had the same education background with him. Somehow, the courage of Chris Gardner to keep moving on with his willingness, showed the spirit of the myth of the material success. The less support did not stop him to try to be someone he really wanted.

Success is not a success without obstacles. He had to face many obstacles during his struggle in becoming the stockbroker. He did not only struggle for achieving his dream to be a stockbroker but he also worked very hard for overcoming the obstacles related to his family and his poverty. These are some obstacles faced by Chris Gardner in achieving his success.

- **Being sent to the jail**

In a rush, sometimes Chris Gardner was forced to park his car near the hospital. Therefore he had to pay the parking ticket because there was a strict regulation for not parking the car near the hospital. Indeed, the bill of parking ticket was getting bigger while Chris Gardner got no money to pay. One day, the policeman came to his apartment and required him to pay the parking tickets otherwise he had to stay overnight at the jail. At that moment, Chris Gardner was just painting the wall of his apartment and his cloth was messy. He was upset because no one could take care of his son when he stayed overnight at the jail. The most annoying thing was when he would be released from the jail at 09.30 in the following morning while he had a job interview in Dean Witter brokerage firm at 10.15.

Policeman	: You gotta pay each parking ticket, otherwise, you're staying
Chris Gardner	: This is all I got
Policeman	: You verify at 09.30 tomorrow morning.
Chris Gardner	: What?
Policeman	: You gotta stay until this thing clears.
Chris Gardner	: No, no I can't spend the night here. I have to pick up my son
Policeman	: You verify at 09.30 tomorrow morning

Chris Gardner : Sir, I have a job interview at Dean
Witter at 10:15 tomorrow morning.
I cannot stay.
Policeman : At 09.30 tomorrow morning.
(DVD, minutes00:39:24)

At 09:30 am in the following morning, Chris Gardner was released from the jail and he had to run from the police office to Dean Witter brokerage firm with his messy cloth. Indeed for most people, walking in the interview was very important and they had to prepare everything well, including his suit. Having a lack of time to change the suit, Chris Gardner ran to the brokerage firm wearing his messy cloth. His spirit of success made him going to the interview without any preparation. He did not want to waste his only chance for being an intern in that brokerage firm. For most people when facing the same circumstance like Chris Gardner was, they would not go to the job interview with the messy outlook. Some people might give up and decided to step backward for not coming to that job interview because of their messy appearance. Chris Gardner's attitude in this part showed the never-give-up spirit that was embedded in the mindset of Chris Gardner. He did not want to lose his only chance to be an internship worker in Dean Witter brokerage firm.



4.1



4.2



4.3

The figure 4.1 was taken by the medium close up to show the outlook performance of Chris Gardner which was so different to the others. The other people looked so tidy, clean and professional, while he looked so messy and obviously awful. In figure 4.2, the moviemaker used the long shot to depict the circumstance in the brokerage office. From all the applicants, Chris Gardner was the only one who was not well-dressed. He obviously looked so unprofessional. In the figure 4.3, the close up shot was used to show about the facial expression of Chris Gardner. Through this figure, his nervous facial expression was obviously visible. Nevertheless, he kept coming to the job interview no matter what

happened. The obstacle that he faced at that moment would never stop him from achieving his dream.

- **Being abandoned by his wife**

When Chris Gardner was just accepted as an intern in Dean Witter Brokerage firm, he had to face the truth that his wife, Linda, was about to leave him. His wife could not longer stand to live in the poverty with Chris Gardner and eventually she made up her mind to leave out of San Francisco to find a job in New York.



5.1



5.2

The figure 5.1 which was taken with the close up shot showed Linda's expression when she decided to abandon her husband and his son. It seemed that actually she did not want to do it. She did it since she had no other choice but living them alone. She thought that by staying in New York, she would be able to change her livelihood better than staying with her husband. The low lighting was used to emphasize the sad atmosphere that they both felt.

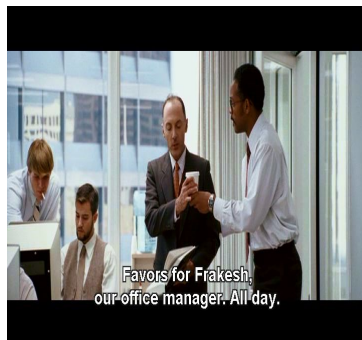
In the figure 5.2, Linda was sitting on her son's bed while looking at him sleeping while Chris Gardner was standing outside the bedroom. The medium shot was used to portray Linda and Chris Gardner which were divided by the wall. The wall in this scene signified the barrier that they both had in running their family life. The poverty had forced Linda to stay out from her husband, and somehow the wall also signified that the relationship they had was already over. In the household life, they had already lived in different way of thinking. They obviously did not have the same goal. In fact they could not support each other. Inside the bedroom, the scene also portrayed their sleeping son, who did not know what was going on. In many cases, the children were always sacrificed for the conflict that happened to their parents.

After being abandoned by his wife, Chris Gardner made up his mind to nurture his son, Christopher, by himself. He took all the responsibilities to raise his son without any assistance from his wife. As a consequence, he had to be able to manage his time and energy to fulfill his son's daily needs and work in the internship program at the same time. However, having double jobs as a worker and a single parent was not easy. By his strong commitment, he did all household activities by himself without any complaint such as bathing his son, taking him to the daycare, feeding him, and taking him to bed.

And here I was again, showed up early. Favor for Frakesh our office manager, all day. Feeling underrated and unappreciated. Then catch the bus by 4 to the place where

they can't spell "happiness". Then cross town the 22 home
(DVD, minutes 01:03:06)

This narration illustrated the circumstance that Chris Gardner had to face everyday during his work in the internship program. The spirit of success had motivated him to struggle very hard, crossing any obstacle he had. For obtaining his goal as the stockbroker, Chris Gardner would do everything, including buying the Doughnut or coffee for his office manager, Alan Frakesh. He ignored his feeling of being underrated and unappreciated.



6.1



6.2

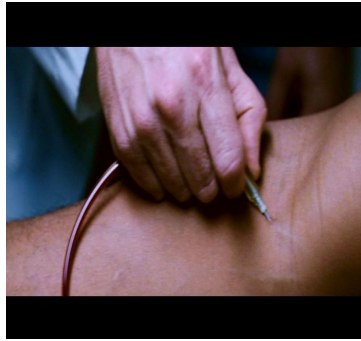
In the pictures above, Chris Gardner was in hurry running to buy coffee and doughnut for Allan Prakesh. Chris Gardner was asked by Allan Prakesh to fulfill what he needed because he was the only black man who worked in that internship program. These pictures somehow illustrated the sense of discrimination toward black people that still existed at that moment.

- **Paying the taxes**

Paying the taxes had become an unseparated part of Chris Gardner's life. For many times, he had to face the problems because he delayed paying the taxes. As explained before, Chris Gardner once stayed overnight at the jail because of his failure in paying the parking tickets. Once again, Chris Gardner had to lose his money in the bank because of his failure to pay the taxes.

This part of my life is called "paying taxes". If you didn't pay them the government could stick their hands into your bank account and take your money. No warning, nothing. It was the 25th of September. I remember that day. Because that's the day that I found out there was only 21 dollars and 33 cents left in my bank account. I was broke (DVD, minutes 01:15:36)

Having 21 dollars in his pocket was not enough to fulfill their daily needs. In the park, he luckily met a crazy man who had brought his stolen density scanner. In fact, the bulb of that stolen scanner was broken and it had to be changed with the new one. Selling that density scanner was his only way to earn the money at that moment. In the urgent situation, someone tends to do everything to survive. In order to buy the new bulb, he had to donate his blood to get money.



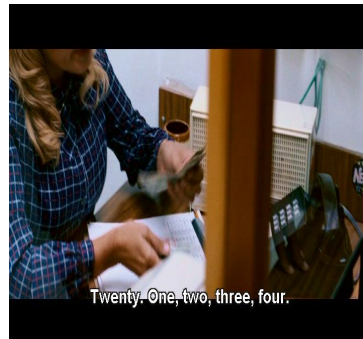
7.1



7.2



7.3



7.4

The figure 7.1 showed the blood donor which was being done by Chris Gardner. In the figure 7.2, the moviemaker tried to use the close up shot to portray Chris Gardner's facial expression when he donated his blood for earning money. His face looked so desperate and pathetic. In the figure 7.3 and 7.4, the moviemaker tried to connect the picture of blood in the figure 7.3 with money in the figure 7.4. Chris Gardner sacrificed his blood for survive.

With the new bulb in his hands, he tried to repair his broken scanner so that he could sell it to the doctor in the hospital.

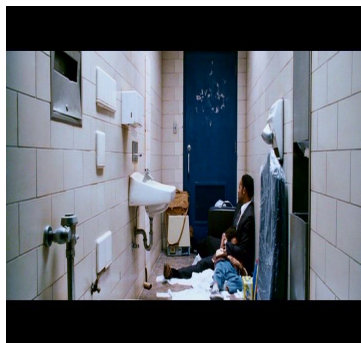


In the figure 8.1, Chris Gardner seemed so busy repairing his density scanner. The little happiness that Chris Gardner felt was clearly reflected in the figure 8.2 when he was finally able to repair his broken scanner. The light of the scanner in this scene could signify the light of hope and the light of the dream. At first, when the government took all his savings in the bank, he looked so powerless and hopeless. With hard work and sacrifice, he was able to make it through.

- **Being homeless**

Being homeless could not be separated from Chris Gardner's life. During his lifetime, he moved from one place to another many times. He never had his own shelter so he had to rent the cheap apartment to stay. For several times, he had to be expelled from his apartment since he was late in paying the rent. The worst moment of his experience being homeless was when he had to be expelled by the landlord from his motel and he did not have any place to go. Since he took a full responsibility for

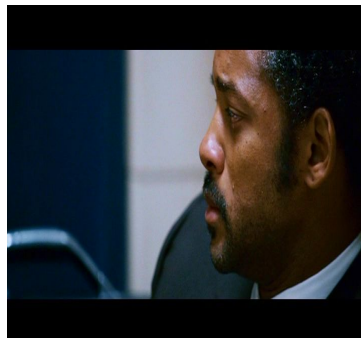
fostering his son, he had to fulfill his son's need by himself. Lack of money, in fact made him suffer too much. Because he did not have much money to pay the rent, the landlord had to drive him out and took all his belongings out from the motel. Without any money in his pocket, the only place he remembered to stay was BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) Toilet.



9.1



9.2



9.3

The figure 9.1 showed the space of the toilet which was so narrow. Chris Gardner brought all his belongings to that place and he used the toilet paper to sit down. While his son, Christopher did not know what was going on. He was sleeping laid to his father's embrace. The moviemaker took the scène in the figure 9.2 by using the long shot and the high camera

angle in order to emphasize Chris Gardner's powerlessness and inferiority as a human being because he was not able to fulfill his very basic need, the need of proper shelter. Chris Gardner's powerlessness was also strengthened by the figure 9.3, a picture which portrayed Chris Gardner when he was crying. He was crying because he felt guilty and failed as a good father for his son.

The portrait of homelessness faced by Chris Gardner was several times depicted along this movie. In fact, staying overnight in the BART toilet was not his only experience when he got no place to sleep. Taking the real condition of the United States of America in the early 1980s, the moviemaker wanted to depict the hardness of American people such as Chris Gardner in dealing with his homelessness.



10.1



10.2



10.3

The figure 10.1 was much contradicted to the figure 10.2. It somehow showed about what really happened in the decade of 1980s in America. Some people enjoyed the fancy things they had, but at the same time many other people lived in poverty and had no shelter to stay. The rows of homeless were dominated by Black people as depicted in the figure 10.2 and 10.3 while the rich people were still dominated by white people as depicted in the figure 10.1. In fact, in the decade of 80s, many black people were still marginalized into poverty. The extreme long shot in the figure 10.2 showed about the rows of homeless standing in line to get a shelter that had been provided by the church. There were only limited

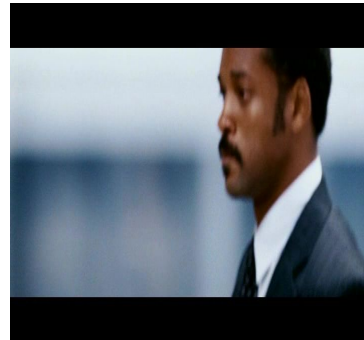
rooms provided by the Church. Everyone should stand in line earlier if they wanted to get a room to stay. The Church shelter opened at 5 p.m and there were numerous people queuing for it. In the figure 10.3, Chris Garner was standing in line to get a shelter in Memorial Glide Church together with other homeless people. After working in Dean Witter brokerage firm, he must be in hurry coming to the church otherwise he would get no place to stay.

I learn to finish my work quickly. I had to finish quickly.
To get in line at Glide by 5. (DVD, minutes 01:35:00)

The hard working that had been done by Chris Gardner eventually delivered him getting closer to his dream. The success does not come in an easy way. In fact, Chris Gardner was able to conquer all the obstacles during his works in the internship program. He could prove himself that he could still be a good responsible father to his son and achieve his goal as the stockbroker at the same time. Finally he could pursue his real true happiness, the happiness that was supposed to be spelled with an I instead of a Y. In the end of the movie, he closed his life story by saying “this part of my life, this little part is called happiness”



11.1



11.2



11.3

These scenes portrayed the moment when Chris Gardner was accepted as a broker in the Dean Witter after following the internship program for six months. The figure 11.1 showed Chris Gardner who was crying. The tears in his face did not any longer represent the sadness and the failure but the tears represented the sense of happiness that he felt. After a long painful struggle, he could achieve his dream. The figure 11.2 depicted Chris Gardner walking out from his office. The way he walked in the figure 11.2 showed the dignity and pride and the way he looked to the others was so different. He kept his head up, as a result of the dignity that he had reached through his tireless effort. The medium shot was used to take the scene in the figure 11.3. The

scene portrayed people walking and Chris Gardner was in between. This scene somehow illustrated the condition of Chris Gardner that had already changed. In the end of the movie, eventually he was able to be a part of normal society. By being accepted in the Dean Witter, he should not deal with the homelessness and poverty anymore.

3. These rewards come to those who are deserving of them (virtuous)

The rewards such as riches and physical comforts do not come in an easy way. Someone can only obtain the success by the hard work and the virtue. Virtue in this case was an element of innate goodness that was owned by someone. In this movie, Chris Gardner was not only depicted as a hard worker but also a virtuous person. His character was established by many goodness elements which later on delivered him easier to achieve his success.

In the myth of material success, the success such as riches, fame and physical comforts only go to a virtuous person. It will not be given to those who sought for the fortune in unscrupulous ways. Chris Gardner's virtues were depicted in several scenes, dialogues and narration in this movie.

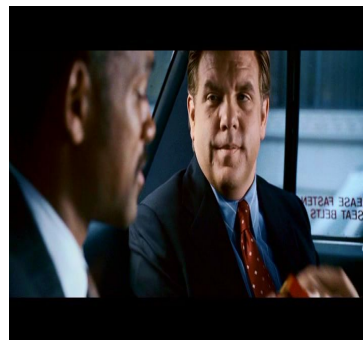
- **Having intelligence**

One of the virtues that were owned by Chris Gardner was his high intelligence. The high intelligence however was an important element in obtaining the success. In achieving his success, Chris Gardner did not only rely on his hard work ethic but also on his high intelligence. He was depicted as a smart person although he never went to college. His high intelligence was clearly pointed out in the scenes when Chris Gardner was

trying to convince Jay Twistle, the Human Resources Head in Dean Witter brokerage firm, that he was qualified enough to work as an intern in that firm.



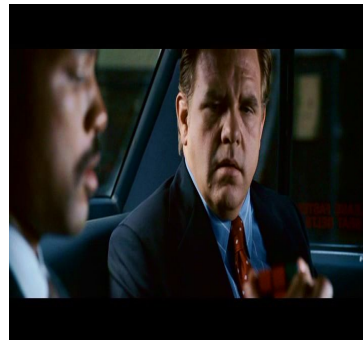
12.1



12.2



12.3



12.4



12.5

The figure 12.1 had showed the moment when Chris Gardner tried to convince Jay Twistle of how smart he was. He told about all achievements he used to obtain but Jay Twistle ignored what he said. Jay Twistle was busy playing the toy in his hands without any intention to listen to what Chris Gardner said. The medium close up shot was used to capture one side dialogue done by Chris Gardner. Facing the fact that he was being ignored, Chris Gardner tried to take Jay Twistle's attention by asking the toy from Jay Twistle's hand. Chris Gardner convinced Jay Twistle that he could solve the puzzle as depicted in the figure 12.2. The extreme close up shot captured the hands of Chris Gardner which were solving the puzzle of Rubik cube.

In fact the existence of Rubik cube in this movie showed the high intelligence that Chris Gardner had. Rubik cube was a challenging game in the decade of 1980s. This game was firstly introduced in 1979 and it was more popular in early 1980s. The Rubik cube was a puzzle game that was considered by many people as a difficult game. Most people usually gave up playing the Rubik cube after many times trials and they failed. Through this movie, the moviemaker tried to depict the high intelligence of Chris Gardner by the way Chris Gardner solved the puzzle in a short time. The difficulty in solving the Rubik cube was also shown in the quotation below:

It's a puzzle measuring just 3 inches by 3 inches on each side made of multiple colors that you twist and turn and try to get a solid color on each side. This little cube is a gift sensation of 1981. Don't expect to solve it easily,

although we did encounter one math professor at USF who took just 30 minutes on his. This is as far as I've gotten on mine. (DVD, Minutes 00:15:47)

In fact, Chris Gardner did not need a long time to solve it. The way Chris Gardner solved the Rubik cube in a short time, deliberately showed how smart he was. In the figure 12.4, it portrayed the facial expression of Jay Twistle which was so surprised seeing how fast Chris Gardner could solve the puzzle game. In the figure 12.5, we could see that the facial expression of Jay Twistle that had already changed. Compared to the figure 12.1, Jay Twistle did not longer ignored Chris Gardner and he was amazed by the high intelligence that Chris Gardner had.

- Self-discipline

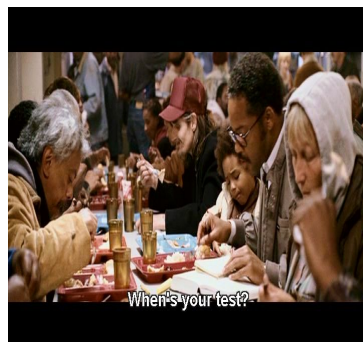
The success that Chris Gardner obtained was not only achieved by his intelligence. Furthermore, high self-discipline was also one of the main factors which delivered him to the ladder of success.

Becoming an intern was the most important part of Chris Gardner's career. The internship moment was the zero hour for Chris Gardner whether he could achieve his dream to become the stockbroker or never at all. Indeed, Chris Gardner would never get the second chance for becoming the stockbroker if he failed in his internship program at Dean Witter brokerage firm.

There was no salary. Not even a reasonable promise of the job. One intern was hired at the end of the program from a pool of 20. And if you weren't that guy, you couldn't even apply the six months' training to another brokerage. (DVD, minute 00:45:00)

Since he realized that Dean Witter brokerage firm was the only place where he could achieve his dream, he struggled very hard to obtain it, not only with his high intelligence but also with his high self-discipline.

During his six months in the internship program, he only got one guidance book which consisted of every information and knowledge about the world of stockbroker and brokerage. With this book, he had to learn about the world of brokerage in details which he never knew before. Moreover, he also had to pass an exam at the end of the internship program and he had to achieve the highest score in order to be accepted as the stockbroker in Dean Witter brokerage firm. Because he did not have any experience working in the brokerage firm before, acknowledging the book was his only assistant to achieve his dream. Thus, he had a high self-discipline in learning the book by optimizing every single spare time he had for reading.



13.1



13.2

Reading the guidance book was a must for Chris Gardner for obtaining the success. He did not allow any obstacle blocked his way to achieve his success. In the figure 13.1, it showed the picture of Chris Gardner who was reading the guidance book while he was having a dinner together with the other homeless people in Glide memorial Church. He did not want to waste his time for nothing since he realized that he had a very short time to study. His huge ambition to be accepted as the stockbroker in Dean Witter had motivated him to study very hard. The figure 13.2 showed the picture of Chris Gardner who was reading the book in the dark. There was not abundant light available in the church shelter. When everybody was sleeping, he kept on reading the book with the minimum light from the window. In figure 13.2, the moviemaker showed how sometimes someone would appreciate the light when the light became so luxurious. Chris Gardner did not allow the low light as a reason for him for not studying.

- Having high responsibility

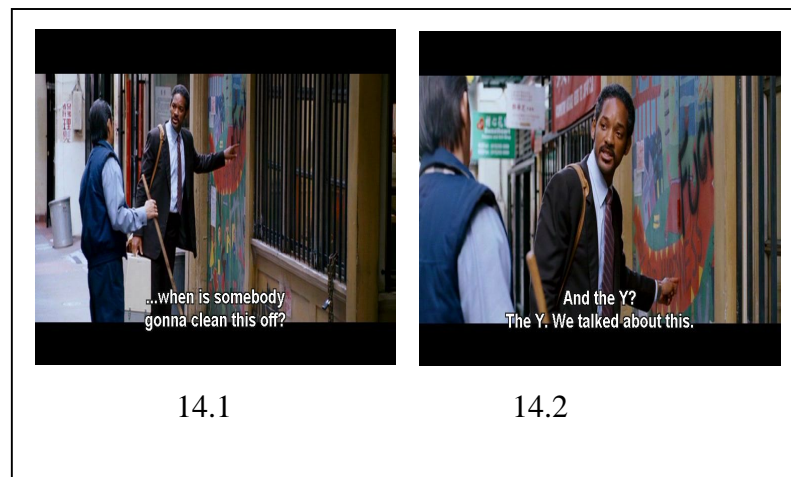
Being a responsible man was one of virtues possessed by Chris Gardner. As a father, he was very responsible to nurture his son by himself. Since he was abandoned by his wife, he had taken a full responsibility for taking care of his only son, Christopher.

As a matter of fact, it was not easy to nurture his son and work in the office at the same time. His strong will to be a good father to his son, nevertheless had triggered him to work very hard. At the beginning of the

movie, Chris Gardner already made up his mind to be always beside his son no matter what happened. It was clearly seen through his narration below:

I'm Chris Gardner. I met my father for the first time when I was 28 years old. And I made up my mind as a young kid that when I had children, my children were gonna know who their father was (DVD, minutes 00:04:48)

As a responsible father, he tried to do everything that was possibly done to fulfill what his son needed. Besides struggling to give a proper shelter for his son, he also had an obligation to give a right education for his son. That was why he was upset seeing the motto of the Declaration of Independence of the mural painting decoration in his son's daycare which was misspelled. He also complained the word "fuck" that was scratched on that mural painting.



In these scenes above, Chris Gardner was complaining about the misspelling of the word "happiness" on that mural painting to the cleaning server at the daycare. He tried to revise the word and said that there was

no letter “Y” in the word happiness. Happiness was not spelled with Y but I. Furthermore, in the figure 14.2, the moviemaker tried to capture the scene by using the medium close up shot to emphasize the word “fuck” on that mural painting.

Chris Gardner : Oh excuse me
When is somebody gonna clean this
off?
And the Y? The Y. we talked about
this
It’s an I in “happiness”
There’s no Y in “happiness”. It’s an
I
(DVD, minutes 00:04:33)

Through his explanation above, it showed that Chris Gardner was disturbed by the word “fuck” on that mural painting because he worried if his son might see it and notice it as a part of the motto. That was why he asked the daycare cleaning server to clean it off.

Moreover, he also explained the misspelling of the word “happyness” to his son as we could see in the dialogue below:

Chris Gardner : It’s written as P-P-Y, but it’s
supposed to be an I in “happiness”
Christopher : Is it an adjective?
Chris Gardner : No, actually it’s a noun.
But it’s not spelled right.
Christopher : Is “fuck” spelled right?
Chris Gardner : Yeah, that’s spelled right, but that’s
not part of the motto, so you’re not
supposed to learn that.
That’s an adult word to show anger
and other things.
But just don’t use that one, okay?
Christopher : Okay
(DVD, minutes 00:16:39)

Giving the moral value for his son was a responsibility for him as a father. Thus he was upset when he knew that his son was not educated properly when his son was staying in the daycare.

Chris Gardner	: He says he's been watching TV
Mrs. Chu	: Oh, little TV for history
Chris Gardner	: Love Boat?
Mrs Chu	: For history navy
Chris Gardner	: That's not the navy. I mean he could watch television at home. We're paying you \$150 a month. If he's gonna be sitting around watching TV all day, we're taking him out of here.

(DVD, minutes 00:18:09)

- Having earnestness

The earnestness is really important in pursuing the dream. This virtue was clearly reflected by the character of Chris Gardner in this movie. Because of his huge earnestness to become a successful person, he struggled very hard to attain his goal no matter what happened. Chris Gardner's earnestness was obviously illustrated in the dialogue during the internship interview below.

Chris Gardner	: I've been sitting there for the last half hour trying to come up with a story that would explain my being here dressed like this. And I wanted to come up with a story that would demonstrate qualities that I'm sure you all admire here, like earnestness and diligence, Team-playing, something. And I couldn't think of anything. But the truth is I was arrested for failure to pay parking tickets.
---------------	---

Jay Twistle : What? Parking tickets?
Chris Gardner : And I ran all the way here from
the Polk station, the police
station.
Martin Frohm : what were you doing before you
were arrested?
Chris Gardner : I was painting the apartment
(DVD, minutes 00:43:18)

The dialogue above showed how brave he was to come in the interview after he was just out of the jail. Confessing a failure was an embarrassing thing for most people. He frankly said that he just stayed overnight in jail because of his failure in paying the parking ticket. He did not make a fake reason to explain to the interviewers of why he dressed up so messy.

The interview was an important moment for Chris Gardner before he was accepted as an intern. It was a zero hour for Chris Gardner whether he could make it through or not. Being a broker was simply new experience for him. Even though he did not know what he was supposed to do being a broker, but he had a huge earnestness to come in the interview. He just believed that he could hope for better livelihood if he were able to work as a broker. Being a broker nevertheless was his only chance to turn his life into new chapter.

His earnestness was also depicted when he already worked in the internship program.

They'd stay till 7, but I had Christopher. I had to do in six hours what they do in nine. In order not to waste any time, I wasn't hanging up the phone in between calls. I realized that by not hanging up the phone, I gained another eight

minutes a day. I wasn't drinking water so I didn't waste any time in the bathroom. (DVD, minutes 01:03:49).

Because of his double jobs as an intern and a single parent, he had to organize his time wisely. In fact, he did not want to waste his chance to be a stockbroker in Dean Witter but he also had a full responsibility to nurture his son. Thus, he really optimized the limited time when he worked in the internship program.

4. The rewards come to those who have the drive and ambition to attain them.

For achieving the highest ladder of success, the drive and ambition are obviously necessary. The drive in this case is the energy or the capacity to get things done, while the ambition refers to strong desire or eagerness of someone to work hard to achieve his goal. The goal for Chris Gardner in this movie was to be accepted as the stockbroker in Dean Witter brokerage firm. For being a stockbroker, he had to defeat all his competitors in the internship program. Intelligence and self-discipline are not enough for a success. In fact, initiative for doing something new and taking the challenge in working is very important for attaining the success. The success moreover does not come to those who are passive and less ambitious. "Succeeding does require a person to be open to new challenges and to take the initiative. Nothing comes by being passive. Good things really do come to those who are willing to work hard for them" (Marsden in Nachbar and Lause, 1992: 146).

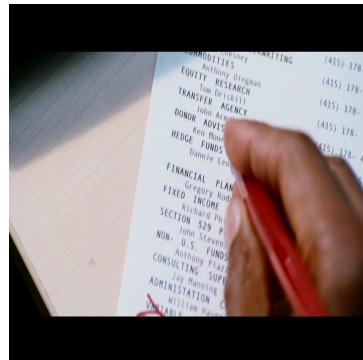
In the internship program, what Chris Gardner and other interns were supposed to do was gaining the clients to the Dean Witter brokerage firm as

many as possible through the call sheets of the workers of the chosen companies as given to them.

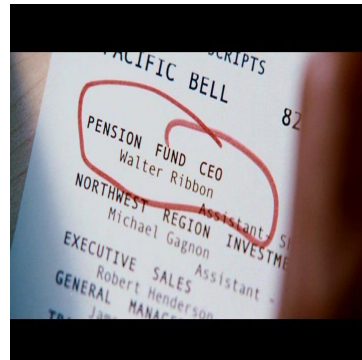
Whoever brought in the most money after six months was usually hired. We were all working our way up call sheets to sign clients, from the bottom to the top, from the doorman to the CEO. But even doing all this, after two months, I still didn't have time to work my way up a sheet. (DVD, Minutes 01:03:34)

After two months working, he was still not able to get any client. Eventually Chris Gardner got an idea to take an initiative by doing the approach to the highest position of the company; that was the CEO. In this movie, the CEO who was being approached by Chris Gardner was the Pacific Bell's CEO, Walter Ribbon.

For a person who was lack of experience like Chris Gardner, he was brave enough to make an appointment with the CEO of the company. Thus, the high ambition that Chris Gardner had stimulated him to take a new challenge that might not be done by other competitors. He tried to dial Ribbon's office number to make an appointment with him in order to explain the prospect of Dean Witter Brokerage firm to organize his pension fund.



15.1



15.2

The figure 15.1 showed the list of worker's call sheet of the Pacific Bell company. Eventually Chris Gardner decided to dial the CEO's office number, Walter Ribbon as reflected in the figure 15.2.

Indeed, the possibility of Chris Gardner as an intern to gain Walter Ribbon as his client was very low but he did not want to surrender. Although missing the opportunity to meet Walter Ribbon in the office, Chris Gardner attempted to meet him in his house in the following morning.

Chris Gardner	: Mr. Ribbon?
Walter Ribbon	: Yes?
Chris Gardner	: How are you Sir?
	Chris Gardner, Dean Witter.
Walter Ribbon	: Oh hi, hi.
Chris Gardner	: This is my son, Christopher
Walter Ribbon	: What are you doing up here?
Chris Gardner	: I came to apologize for missing our appointment.
Walter Ribbon	: You didn't need to come up
Chris Gardner	: We were in neighborhood visiting a very close friend and I wanted to take his opportunity to say thank you for your time. I know that you probably wait for me.

(DVD, minutes 01:10:43)

The ambition that Chris Gardner had was not only reflected through his attitude but also through his way of thinking. He believed that he could always do everything that everyone else could do. No one could stop him from achieving his dream. Thus this spirit inspired him to work very hard to achieve his success in Dean Witter brokerage firm. He also shared this belief to his son as we could see through his words below:

Hey, don't ever let somebody tell you "you can't do something", not even me, All right? You gotta dream, you gotta protect it. People can't do something themselves they wanna tell you "you can't do it". If you want something, go get it. Period. (DVD, minutes 00:54:59)

In fact this spirit was embedded in the mindset of Chris Gardner. Along the movie, he proved that by the spirit of success he could achieve something that he had never imagined before. The rewards really came closer to Chris Gardner because he had the drive and ambition to attain them. His life's story however is the evidence of the myth material success that still exists among American people today. His limitations such as poverty and education background do not block his way to turn his life around. Everything is possible if everyone wants to work hard for it.

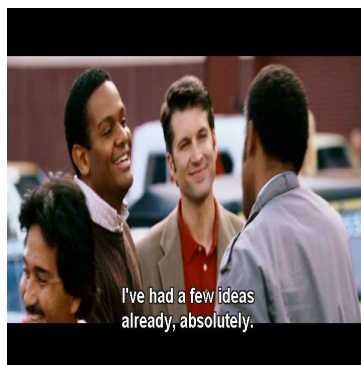
5. A modicum of good luck.

The last motif in the myth of material success was a modicum of good luck. The luck was only in a modicum because the success did not rely on the luck but on the pluck. The modicum of luck would eventually come closer to those who had done perpetual efforts and had the drive and ambition to obtain

their dream. In this movie, Chris Gardner also received the good luck after doing a long tireless effort.

The luck which Chris Gardner received was when Jay Twistle was confused solving the Rubik cube in his hands. In fact, the existence of Rubik cube in the movie did not only show the intelligence that Chris Gardner had but it also showed the modicum of luck that Chris Gardner received. Without the existence of this toy, it would be harder for Chris Gardner to convince Jay Twistle about his quality.

The luck was also received by Chris Gardner when Walter Ribbon, the CEO of Pacific Bell company, offered him to watch the football game together. Going to the football game was a good chance for Chris Gardner to approach Walter Ribbon to invest his pension fund in Dean Witter. Luckily, he was not only having a chance to watch football game in the private section but he was also introduced by Walter Ribbon's Colleagues and friends.



It was the scene when Walter Ribbon's colleagues gave their phone's number to Chris Gardner soon after watching the football game. Chris Gardner was able to gain many clients from Pacific Bell Company afterward. His good link with Walter Ribbon was able to attract 31 employers in Pacific Bell Company to invest their money in Dean Witter. Moreover, the good link that Chris Gardner had with Walter Ribbon was shown in the dialogue below:

Chris Gardner	: Thank you very much for this, really...
Walter Ribbon	: hey, it's my pleasure, Chris
Chris Gardner	: And Mr. Ribbon I also wanna thank you for giving me the opportunity to discuss the asset management which we believe to be far superior to anything you got going over at Morgan Stanley. Really, I think you're gonna be blown away. Point blank, Dean Witter needs to be managing your retirement portfolio.
Walter Ribbon	: You know, I didn't have any notion that you were new there. I like you, but there's no chance I'm gonna let you direct our fund.

DVD, minutes 01:13:31)

Chris Gardner's effort to come to Walter Ribbon's house showed that he was an earnest person. Somehow Walter Ribbon saw his humble attitude and it made him interested to him. Although he was not able to attract Walter Ribbon to invest his fund in Dean Witter, but Chris Gardner was able to give a good impression to him.

Chris Gardner was so lucky because he had a chance to know Walter Ribbon. But his luck would not come to him if he did not have any initiative to make an appointment with Walter Ribbon and visit him in his house.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Conclusion

After conducting the analysis, the researcher came to conclusions. The conclusions were drawn from the analysis in order to answer the question in the research question. The myth of material success really existed in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie and it was reflected clearly in the main Character, Chris Gardner. As a part of society Chris Gardner was marginalized by his poverty and education background but these limitations did not stop him from pursuing his dream to be a stockbroker. He was sure that he had the equal opportunity to be whoever he wanted to be. During his struggle in pursuing his dream to be a stockbroker, Chris Gardner had to face many obstacles such as sent to the jail, abandoned by his wife, paying taxes, and being homeless. In fact at the end of the story, Chris Gardner was able to prove himself that he could overcome the obstacles by working hard. Chris Gardner was eventually accepted as a stockbroker in Dean Witter brokerage firm after doing his long restless struggle. The rewards that Chris Gardner received did not come in an easy way. Chris Gardner deserved to obtain those rewards because he had an innate goodness. Chris Gardner was not only depicted as a hard worker but also a virtuous person. In the movie, Chris Gardner was depicted to have virtues such as intelligence, self-discipline, high responsibility, and earnestness. Chris Gardner was not

passive and less ambitious in pursuing his dream. Through the movie, Chris Gardner was very ambitious to obtain what he wanted. After two-month working, he was still not able to get any client. Eventually Chris Gardner got an idea to take an initiative by doing the approach to the highest position of the company; that was the CEO. For a person who lacked of experience like Chris Gardner, he was brave enough to make an appointment with the CEO of the company. Thus, the high ambition that Chris Gardner had, stimulated him to take a new challenge that might not be done by other competitors. In the myth of material success, the luck was only in a modicum because the success did not rely on the luck but on the pluck. He got luck when Walter Ribbon, the CEO of Pacific Bell company, offered him to watch the football game together. His good link with Walter Ribbon was eventually able to attract 31 employers in Pacific Bell Company to invest their money in Dean Witter brokerage firm.

B. Recommendation

Hopefully, this research may give recommendation to the readers and the other researchers who intend to comprehend in studying American Studies and take movie as the object of the study. It is useful to add more information about movie, especially in order to have more understanding in reading a film. This research is also expected to be a reference for other researchers who are interested in the myth of material success.

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